

The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana

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Simon Baynham

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For Nina

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Preface

No academic enterprise such as this is the product of a single writer's labours. This book began life as a doctoral dissertation at the London School of Economics. In its preparation, a great many friends, colleagues and organisations gave most generously of their time, knowledge and advice. The financial support that made this study possible came from two sources: a Social Science Research Council (now the Economic and Social Research Council) scholarship, held at LSE in 1973–1975; and London University's Central Research Fund, which provided a travel award whilst I was still under the SSRC's auspices, enabling me to make a second visit to Ghana in 1975.

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In the course of my work, I have used the libraries and other resources of the following institutions: the LSE, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Exeter University (where I was able to make use of the nationally designated depository of Ghanaian research materials located there), the British Public Record Office, Ghana's Institute of Management and Public Administration and the University of Ghana, Legon. For their staffs' efficiency, goodwill and unfailing patience, goes my lasting appreciation.

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Simon Baynham
RMA, Sandhurst

Acronyms

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ANC	<i>Armée Nationale Congolaise</i>
AORs	African Other Ranks
AYO	Anlo Youth Organisation
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
Bn	Battalion
BRNC	Britannia Royal Naval College (Dartmouth, England)
C	Cedi
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Commanding Officer
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSM	Company Sergeant-Major (a Warrant Officer, class II)
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence
DMO & I	Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence
GCR	Gold Coast Regiment
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GSO	General Staff Officer
GYP	Ghana Young Pioneers
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
i/c	In charge
IG-P	Inspector-General of Police
JSTT	Joint Services Training Team
KAR	King's African Rifles
MATS	Military Academy and Training School (Teshie, Ghana)
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NAL	National Alliance of Liberals
NC	New Cedi
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer (a lance-corporal, corporal, sergeant or staff sergeant)
NLC	National Liberation Council
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NPP	Northern People's Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
NSS	National Security Service

NT	Northern Territories
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OC	Officer Commanding
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit (Aldershot, England)
ORs	Other Ranks
PDD	Presidential Detail Department
POGR	President's Own Guard Regiment
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	People's National Party
PP	Progress Party
QM	Quartermaster
RMAS	Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (Camberley, England)
ROSTS	Regular Officers Special Training School (Teshie, Ghana)
RSM	Regimental Sergeant-Major (a Warrant Officer, class I)
RWAFF	Royal West African Frontier Force
SMC	Supreme Military Council
TC	Togoland Congress
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UP	United Party
WA (Div)	West African (Division)
WAFF	West African Frontier Force
WO	Warrant Officer (RSM or CSM)

There was a famine in the land . . .

Sato yarun
Kpan ta lara
Sato yarun
Kpan ta lara
Kpan ta lara
Hunna danna wan

(Dagarti)

Salt is beaten by the rain
Oil should not laugh
Salt is beaten by the rain
Oil should not laugh
Oil should not laugh
For the sun will soon shine

1

Introduction

In recent years, an impressive volume of work has chronicled and analysed the role of armies in new states, but the scope and quality has been uneven. Much of the earlier literature concerned itself with an examination of the causes of coups—why and under what circumstances military forces intervened in civilian politics. Very little of this was based on original or detailed research; secondary sources, especially newspaper reports, provided much of the raw material.¹ The result was the proliferation of boundary-blurred general theories which were capable of absorbing almost anything. To make matters worse, these generalisations frequently contradicted each other. Almost every tendency or hypothesis manifested its counterpart.²

It is only relatively recently that authoritative case-studies of the military in selected states have appeared. Of the monographs on individual black African countries, the most valuable concern Nigeria and Sierra Leone.³ With these notable exceptions, detailed information on the sub-Saharan armies is not available. For the most part, the officer corps and ranks of these forces are small, yet there exists almost no documentation of ethnic/regional origins, age, educational attainment, job opportunities and preferences, patterns of recruitment, localisation, military training and subsequent career structure. As one observer has noted, the point is very clear: if we are to understand the subject of our enquiry “we need to scale down our theoretical perspectives to embrace smaller units.”⁴

The present book, which is in essence a study of both the army officer corps and civil-military relations in Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana (1957–1966), endorses the underlying sentiment of this maxim. Although the wider social and political setting is not in any sense ignored here, the primary concern is with the character and organisational structure of the army itself. One reason for this is that up until now very little attention has been devoted to the internal organisation of Ghana's military establishment.⁵ Another is that a good deal has already been written on the nature of politics and society in the period now under review, the most important of which is Austin's seminal work published in 1964.⁶ However, this emphasis on the military rather than the societal factor requires further elaboration.

Two major approaches have been developed in the study of civil-military relations in new states. The first “internal characteristics” model focuses

on the social organisation of the armed forces: structural format and techniques of control, hierarchy and authority, recruitment and assimilation of military roles, skill patterns and career development, sources of cohesion and cleavage and professionalism. In this model, explanations of military participation in politics are mainly restricted to the inner characteristics and dynamics of the armed forces themselves. But as Janowitz (who has devoted most of his academic effort to investigating the composition and sociology of military bureaucracies) has pointed out, any analysis of an institution's internal structure requires attention to the social context.⁷

The second school of thought, that favoured by Huntington who argues "that the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political,"⁸ accentuates the social and political circumstances in which the army operates.⁹ Although he does not ignore the strictly military variable altogether, Finer also maintains that military interference is largely regulated by what he calls the degree of public attachment to civilian institutions or the "level of political culture."¹⁰ For him, the greater the degree of political modernisation, the fewer opportunities the military has for intervention and the less support it will receive. The lower the development of a well-mobilised public opinion, the more numerous the opportunities and the greater the likelihood of public support. For instance, the 1920 Kapp Putsch in Berlin and the 1961 Generals' Revolt in Algiers were met with overt civilian opposition and strikes,¹¹ whereas coups in Upper Volta/Burkina Faso, Dahomey/Benin and the Central African Republic have been greeted with civilian support or indifference.

In fact, as a closer examination of their texts reveals, Finer and Huntington were as sensitive to the importance of the military's social and organisational profile as Janowitz was to that of the society. Today, there is a general consensus that both traditions in civil-military relations analysis are important and that the explanatory force of stressing the internal qualities of the armed forces to the exclusion of the social and political sphere, or *vice versa*, is limited.

In order to avoid the pitfalls inherent in focusing entirely on one or other of the two divergent traditions in this field, both approaches will be utilised. However, we do not seek the kind of balance that will curry favour with all students of the military whatever their individual predilections about the respective weight to be apportioned to the two models. We set out, therefore, to concentrate on the army itself firstly, because this is not intended to be just another study of why soldiers seize office (although it is this too), but rather it is an attempt to explore the nature and development of the army as an institution. The second reason for our emphasis is because there exists no adequate statement on the Ghanaian military as a social organisation.

This said, it should be appreciated that while roughly definable demarcations between an institution and its social and political environment may be identified, specific case-studies will reveal an interplay of societal and

organisational variables with transactions or influence flowing across these boundaries in both directions.¹² Such exchanges are complex and quantifiably elusive and their repercussions are made all the more so by variations in timescale between different interactions. The pattern of recruitment into the Ghanaian officer corps, for instance, led to a concentration of particular ethnic/regional groupings at certain levels of the hierarchy. But this was of relatively little political import until Africans took over all the executive posts following the expulsion of British expatriates from the army in 1961 and, later, the coup staged dominantly by Ewes in 1966.

Given the multiplicity and complexity of factors and events which are relevant to this study, it is useful to have an overall conceptual idea within which to operate. For our purposes, this framework will view the military establishment as a bureaucratic organisation or social system with definable borders. While the stress on the formal organisational model will help us to study the behaviour of people in terms of the occupational roles they have learned, it is hoped that the theoretical validity of this work will be underpinned by attention to the behavioural approach to the social sciences, that which emphasises processes and events.

The distinctive mark of behaviourism has been its focus on the study of the individual actor in the social system and the unity of political science with the social or behavioural sciences as a whole.¹³ When the social scientist observes individuals in society, he wants to know why the individual behaves as he does—what meaning his action has for him. For Weber, the meaning of an action to the actor is an essential feature for its understanding. If a subaltern or government office clerk imagines that his social origins are hindering his career prospects, the belief may take on real political significance. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, an important part of the data obtained through interviews is concerned with individual and group patterns of expectation and the related sociological notion of subjective definition of situation.

Having sketched a preliminary outline of the general approach to be followed here, it is pertinent at this stage to provide an indication of the remaining contents of this chapter with a view to guiding the reader through the arguments that follow. In order to obtain a more balanced picture of the internal social organisation and functioning of the military, the bulk of this Introduction will be devoted to the sociopolitical environment. Because it is important to set the armed forces against the wider domestic scene, special attention will be paid here to a framework of analysis that emphasises social stratification—horizontal and vertical—rather than a description of institutions. The changing institutional relationship of the military and the state is, in any case, a recurring theme of subsequent chapters. The penultimate section of this chapter provides a brief outline of the principal issues and major propositions of the remaining chapters. Finally, this Introduction concludes with a note on sources and methods.

The Sociopolitical Context

While this investigation into the distinctive nature of the army and its political behaviour requires a thorough examination of the military's organisational and professional characteristics, such a study would be severely deficient if the nature of the social and political setting was not given some prominence. However, in this regard one caveat is necessary here. The present account does not analyse Ghana's economic policies during the Nkrumah years. Obviously this area cannot be ignored, nor will it be where circumstances dictate. In short, the writer has avoided a comprehensive treatment of the economic field in order to keep the study within tractable limits. In any case, a good deal has already been published on the subject.¹⁴

During the past two decades or so, the emergence of multi-tribal states which encompass both inherited divisions and divisions evolving as a result of the spread of education, urbanisation and industrialisation makes the analysis of social stratification important for the understanding of contemporary African societies. Whilst the term social stratification usually evokes concepts of class, it is not certain that classes, as commonly understood in Western industrial societies, have developed in black Africa.¹⁵ In fact, as one student has noted, a cursory study of developing African states seems to indicate that the most violent conflicts are between ethnic and religious groups, and not between socioeconomic classes.¹⁶

In the course of this debate, two main schools of thought, representing opposed standpoints, have emerged. In-between lie a number of other views and perspectives. Maintaining that the notion of class is foreign and alien to the study of Africa, the liberal school applies the concept of social *stratification* and a ruling elite or competing elites of opposed interests.¹⁷ On the other hand, the Marxist or quasi-Marxist view argues that contemporary African societies are not only characterised by a high degree of class formation, but also that the only relevant approach to the study of African societies is through class analysis.¹⁸

Whilst Ghana certainly exhibits sharp inequalities of wealth, income and status between the poor and the rich, the groups to which the term social classes might normally apply are not, as yet, clearly differentiated. There does not appear to be a governing class as such, but rather competing elites of opposed interests.¹⁹ Thus, the notion of a power or ruling elite appears to be the most suitable model for examining horizontal strata in Ghanaian society, not least because of the ethnic heterogeneity of the most privileged individuals. However, such an approach will weave only a partial picture of society; the other threads of Ghana's complex social tapestry will be highlighted later in this chapter by an examination of the ethnic, regional and communal divisions—the vertical distinctions—of this West African state. But first a few more words about the nature of elites.

During the past fifteen years or so, as social scientists have devoted increasing attention to the problems of modernisation in developing areas, there has been a revived interest in the phenomenon of the elite. The

significance of elite studies becomes clearer when it is realised that in many societies a minority of the populace have a hugely disproportionate influence in the authoritative allocation of values and resources. Although the term elite, like that of class, presents problems of definition, there are several notions generally applied when using the word.

Writing in 1956, Nadel, who has drawn particular attention to the importance of elites as normative reference groups, argued that superiority is one of these: "The elite influences the conduct of others by being merely what it is, a body judged to be superior in numerous ways. It is looked up to and imitated, because it is credited with important gifts and desirable attributes."²⁰

But it is the characteristic of power that is the most important single attribute of an elite. When a group of people is able to impose its will upon the rest of society, then the group may be said to possess power. It is important for our argument to distinguish between three sources of elite power: firstly, that derived from the control of economic resources; secondly, that procured from the occupancy of office; and, finally, that obtained through deference.

In many Third World states including the Ghanaian case examined here, what should be especially stressed is that occupancy of governmental office is the principal basis for the distribution of economic resources and the achievement of high social status associated with the possession and consumption of wealth. And one of the most obvious general features of the new African elites is their political and bureaucratic character. Outside the less developed areas dominated by traditional chiefly clans, the most powerful Africans are politicians, high officials and army officers.²¹ However, unlike the situation prevailing in Latin America, landownership in most African states plays an insignificant role in this respect. Of far greater importance is the control of resources produced from the land which constitute, in very real terms, the major area of wealth creation. Indeed, the wholesale success of the urban minority in milking the rural areas of Ghana has led Rathbone to identify the cocoa producers in particular as "the aphids of the state-created bourgeoisie's ladybird."²²

Peter Lloyd defined the elite as "those persons who were Western educated and wealthy to a high degree relative to the mass of the population."²³ Although failing to register the point that the two factors are not necessarily inclusive, in his opinion possession of high education and wealth are the major criteria distinguishing the elite from the masses. Kerstiens also places considerable emphasis on education in his study of elites in Asia and Africa. For him, education of necessity gives authority and power to the holder, bringing in its wake deference from the uneducated.²⁴ Whilst this view may appear somewhat dated, it is more clearly true in those places where education is still the prerogative of the relatively few, and it is for this reason that very often the term elite has been given to the educated stratum of society.

In politics, the skill and expertise associated with formal education, combined with organisation (defined here in terms of structure rather than

process), tend to set some individuals apart and above. Organisation may be seen as the extra vital ingredient that makes elite rule natural and inevitable. According to one commentator, the influence and power of any minority "is irresistible as against each single individual in the majority who stands alone before the totalities of the organised minority."²⁵

Nonetheless, it must not be assumed that intra-elite relations are characterised by harmony and cooperation. Whilst there may be similarities in social background and education, rivalry for power occurs between different groupings with conflicting sets of values and aspirations within the elite. Lastly, the degree of mobility within the ranking systems, and the extent to which individuals of similar rank interact as equals forming recognisable social groups with distinct interests, are also of importance in elite studies.

We turn now, however, to look more closely at Ghana itself. The brief description of the country's horizontal and vertical social formations offered in the next two sections will be developed and complemented in Chapters 2 and 3, where considerable space is devoted to the social origins of the black officers who were commissioned into the colonial military forces in the 1940s and 1950s.

Horizontal Formations in Ghana

Before the European colonisation of Africa, a traditional elite of chiefs, priests and elders governed their societies. In the region that was to become Ghana, the chiefs included the autocratic rulers of a number of northern chiefdoms (Dagomba, Gonja, Mamprussi and Wala, for instance); the elected chiefs of Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and the Colony; and the irremovable chiefs of the Krobo states in the eastern Colony and of the small Ewe village communities.²⁶

During the colonial era, these men were used by the British in systems of native administration (under which commissioners controlled their territory with a minimum of central government interference) as agents of colonial rule. The educated traditional rulers who sat in councils of chiefs or on the legislative council saw themselves with the approach of Independence as the legitimate successors to British rule. However, their ambitions of filling the political vacuum on the departure of the metropolitan power suffered a creeping reverse from the growth of an urban intelligentsia that similarly expected to inherit power following the withdrawal of the British colonial authority. This group owed its position to economic change and to developments in education.

The changes resulting from the impact of European commercial and administrative forces, together with the introduction and rapid expansion in the number of elementary and secondary schools—Dennis Austin's "catalyst of nationalist growth"²⁷—created an indigenous stratum of clerks for the civil service, teachers for the mission and other schools and a growing number of people who became independent professionals. Most of these, and especially the more highly educated among them, lived in Accra

or the other coastal towns of Elmina, Sekondi, Takoradi and Cape Coast. Through the nationalist movements, they sought to wrest power from the expatriate rulers. And in so doing, these individuals identified themselves with the entire colonial territory as well as with their own ethnic groups or local communities.²⁸

Often called the middle-class in that it occupied an intermediate position between the European rulers and the mass of the population, this Western-educated elite did not constitute a homogenous grouping.²⁹ Professor K.E. de Graft Johnson has written that the "more prestigious lawyers, doctors, senior civil servants, and the rising class of business managers," who constituted what he called the upper middle-class or intelligentsia, eventually formed the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) for the purpose not only of bringing nationalist pressure to bear on the post-1945 colonial administration, but also with the aim of establishing themselves as the natural heirs to British rule.³⁰

In the event, a counter-elite of urban elementary school-leavers and the "young men" and "commoners" of the rural areas, led by Kwame Nkrumah (who, unlike most of his supporters, was educated at secondary school—Achimota—and Western universities) through the Convention People's Party (CPP), inherited the political kingdom. Between 1951, when Nkrumah became leader of government business within a colonial framework of authority following the success of his party in the February elections, and the 1966 coup, the politically redundant intelligentsia retained considerable status within Ghanaian society through their exercise of professional and administrative skills indispensable to the needs of a new state. But as Chapter 10 shows, it was not until the army-police intervention that the intelligentsia (with whom the coup-makers identified in many respects) assumed the political prominence that had evaded them since the early 1950s.

On the grounds of education, employment and disposable income, the first generation of army officers who form the focal point of this study may be considered as belonging to the Western-educated elite alluded to above. They differed from what has been described as the intelligentsia by virtue of their humbler social origins and poorer educational qualifications. It should also be stressed that these officers were closely involved during the late colonial period with the control mechanism of the British authorities. As a result, they would have been working in cooperation with the imperial administration at a time when their civilian counterparts were becoming increasingly active in the nationalist struggle.

In fact, as will be seen in the next two chapters, the officer corps under the period of review was not itself a group united by education and social background. Quite apart from ethnic/regional dissimilarities, among them were found former NCOs like Awhaitey and Bruce with little formal education, as well as officers like Afrifa and Asare with secondary school and Sandhurst educations. Despite these differences, the officer corps of the fifties and sixties may be regarded as an elite group (albeit with its own

set of corporate interests) within that wider grouping earlier referred to as the Ghanaian elite.

It has already been stressed that one perspective inherent in this study is that a more potent source of conflict than class derives from friction and competition between elites. This might manifest itself in confrontation between status layers of the civilian elite (between the intelligentsia of the UGCC and the counter-elite of the CPP, for example), between bureaucrats and politicians (such as the tensions which developed between career civil servants and CPP party functionaries) and between the military establishment and any group that threatens its corporate identity or standing (as occurred between the regular army and Nkrumah's Presidential Guard). Of course, *stasis* may also reveal itself within these several groupings, as indicated, for instance, by rivalries inside the officer ranks of the armed forces during the latter years of the First Republic.

The struggles within what have been loosely termed the elite have converged upon attempts to gain control of the resources associated with governmental or state power. The state is the largest employer of skilled and educated labour in the country. It is a monopoly source of import and export licences for Ghana's international trade, as well as the most important origin of contracts to local and foreign business. It is also the major fount of credit, loans and assistance to local businessmen and farmers. Finally, it has almost total control over the distribution of communications, schools, sanitation, clinics and other amenities.³¹

Given this overwhelming concentration of power and patronage, it is hardly surprising that individuals, groups and localities have seemed utterly absorbed with jockeying for representation in, or control over, the central structures of government and through them for influence in a state whose main function is apparently to provide handouts for its clientele. In his "Explanatory Notes on the Political Economy of Africa," Claude Ake, in a view from the Left, also stresses state domination of the economy: "In Africa, much of the exploitation is done not by individual capitalists, but by the state acting as a powerful entrepreneur. . . . Many of those who exploit the proletariat do not themselves own the means of production; but they control the power of the state which is used to control the means of production."³² The result of this concentration of resources—and in our view this aspect is a central characteristic of the Ghanaian political culture—has been the tendency of the populace "to associate the government with limitless power, endless wealth and a high prestige."³³

The dependence on the government of the majority of individuals who make up the educated elite for their salaries, status and overall economic security means that politics in Ghana may be viewed as a perennial struggle by individuals and groups to maintain and extend their economic standing by gaining control over the allocative powers of the state. Many theories of society have stemmed from certain assumptions about the characteristics of the individuals who compose it; the present theory of economic behaviour argues that one of the prime motivations of man is the desire to pursue

economic goals and to maximise his material satisfactions and societal status. And in our estimation, the men who constituted the hierarchy of the armed forces in the first decade after Independence were as much a party to, and participated in, the system as their civilian counterparts.

In embracing such an approach, we endorse the view that military intervention and military rule should not be viewed "as an attempt by an external body to mediate between . . . antagonistic elite groups or between politicians and masses."³⁴ It is one argument of this study that, instead, it should be seen as something quite different, namely as an attempt by the military (or a section of it) to protect and extend its privileged position in competition with other societal interests. Put another way, the present contention is that like other elite factions, the military officer corps during the period examined here was engaged in an all-out conflict for the greatest possible share of power and its material perquisites. The rhetoric of altruism and patriotism is a screen to hide the soldiers' sectional interests, and the maintenance of public order carries with it the maintenance of the domination of those who control that order. In short, it is submitted that the officer corps was heavily influenced by the knowledge that political office is the main source of power and the key to the preservation or improvement of personal and corporate living standards.

So far, some introductory comments have been made about the emergence of an elite. It has been argued that competition within this minute proportion of the population over governmental resources constitutes a major process in domestic politics. But sociological literature on the social fabric of new states also emphasises the importance of familial loyalties, local and regional connections and ethnic identities which crosscut "objective" strata based upon occupation, education and income. The evidence suggests that the pervasive character and persistence of primordial attachments—those that arise from a sense of natural affinity deriving from one's birth into a particular family, community or cultural group, rather than from personal affections of common interest—has militated against the emergence of clearly defined status groups in Ghanaian society. In other words, the continuing salience of kinship ties and its network of obligations has inhibited the institutionalisation of class or other allegiances.³⁵ But cross-cleavages do not in themselves preclude disagreements between individuals and interests; they result instead in a diversity of groupings and a multiplicity of allegiances which then combine differently on separate issues.

As a result, it is frequently the case that elite factions articulate themselves through primary groups and cliques that slice across formal bureaucratic arrangements. On the other hand, such groupings may crystallise around interests defined, for purposes of competition for high office and scarce resources, in narrowly institutional terms, the army being one obvious example of this. In the present setting, the persisting nature of both traditional patterns of affiliation as well as those rooted in institutional loyalties will become apparent, it is hoped, in our analysis of developments leading to the 1966 coup. It might be helpful, however, to provide an

outline of Ghana's ethnic/regional make-up and to establish at the outset some of the assumptions guiding our approach in this respect.

Ghana's Vertical Social Structures

For the sake of convenience, the peoples of Ghana may be divided into four major categories distinguished not only by linguistic differences but also by the possession of common cultural attributes and by common myths of origin. These principal ethnic groups are the Akan, the Ewe, the Ga-Adangbe and the Gur-speaking peoples of northern Ghana. The relative homogeneity within each of these groupings did not provide a basis for national political solidarity at the time of Independence. On the contrary, there were intense, historically based antagonisms and conflicts; ethnoculturally similar, but politically distinct, states often regarded each other as aliens or "strangers." In the Northern Territories, for example, some two dozen separate political units were recognised by the colonial government. In the Ashanti Confederacy, there were sixteen distinct divisions or states. These regional demarcations were preserved by the colonial administration.

Numerically, the Akan, who came to what is now Ghana in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and who occupy most of the southern half of the state west of the Volta river, form the predominant linguistic and cultural grouping in what are now the Eastern, Central, Western and Brong-Ahafo Regions as well as in Ashanti. The Akan-speaking peoples, who adhere to a matrilineal system, are composed of a number of groups linked by linguistic and cultural ties, but individually named Ashanti, Brong, Akwapim, Tchakosi, Fanti, Kwahu ("Ghana's Jews" as one Kwahu army officer described them), Bono, Nzima and so on.

The Ewe constitute a single linguistic group and account for approximately 13 percent of the population. They are thought to have come from the area east of the Niger in the sixteenth century and are much more localised geographically, occupying the southeastern corner of Ghana, east of the Volta river extending from the coast of Keta-Ada to about eighty miles inland. The area in and around the coastal town of Anloga houses the Anlo Ewes, a particularly tight-knit community from which most of Ghana's first Ewe army officers were recruited. The majority of the Ewe population, however, are to be found across the frontier in former French Togoland, a legacy that accounts for frequent irredentist pressures from both sides of the border. Living among the Ewe are some small groups who speak languages different from Ewe. These include the Akpafu, Sontrokofi, Avatime and Logba.

Among the Ga-Adangbe, who form about 9 percent of the population, are the Ga, Adangbe, Krobo and Ada. These groups are believed to have come along the coast from the areas now known as Nigeria and Benin (Dahomey) in the fifteenth century. They created a series of small independent townships along the coast including Accra, Labadi, Tema and Teshie. As with the Ewe, but unlike the Akan, the Ga-Adangbe follow the patrilineal line of succession.

Almost the entire population of northern Ghana—the area north of the Volta river, but excluding the Volta Region, now known as the Northern and Upper Regions—belongs to one of the four subdivisions of the Gur-speaking peoples: the Mole-Dagbani, Grusi, Gurma and Senufo. These groups can be further subdivided into various tribes. The main ones are the Gonja, in the area extending from Bole to southeast of Salaga; Kassena, Mossi, Nankani and Builsa, in the central zone; Dagarti, Wala and Sissala in the northwest; Mamprussi and Fra-Fra, from the extreme North; and Dagomba, from further south in the vicinity of Tamale and Yendi. Although there are some interesting cultural differences, it is appropriate for the purposes of this study to treat the northern part of Ghana, which accounts for some 30 percent of the population, as one distinct cultural and linguistic area.³⁶

The substantial cultural differences between these four principal ethnic groupings were not eroded by the colonial era as some might have expected, but were instead highlighted by the uneven impact of modernity and education in the country. Instead of blurring ethnic contrasts and assertions, colonisation often contributed to a crystallisation of ethnic units and to a rigidification of traditionally moving boundaries. In this respect, the British policy of indirect rule has had marked consequences since differences between local people and “strangers” were reinforced by drawing, as far as possible, distinct boundaries according to ethnic criteria.³⁷ But as one observer has noted,

the scale of ethnic differences does not determine the degree of hostility between the groups. . . . The hostility derives, of course, not from the ethnic differences but from competition between peoples of wealth and power . . . it is the intensity of this competition which is probably the prime determinant of the degree of ethnic hostility.³⁸

In Ghana, this competition springs from actual and perceived differences between various areas of the country in terms of educational facilities, social amenities and overall economic development. As in Nigeria, the educational and economic benefits of British colonialism were unevenly distributed, to the advantage of the littoral and the southern regions and to the disadvantage of the hinterland. Such disparities deepened the antipathies between communities and regions by fostering attitudes of superiority and inferiority. In many cases, such attitudes are tied up with objective qualities by which ethnic groups are perceived and stereotyped. For instance, according to popular images, northerners in Ghana are seen as illiterate and stupid; the Ewe are skillful traders and thieves who often dabble in witchcraft.³⁹

These differences have not been eliminated since Independence, and they have caused a sense of relative deprivation on the part of the people of the more backward areas who feel that they have been exploited by the richer parts of the country. Poverty and backwardness have become identified with territory rather than with social class; and ethnic origin has been closely correlated with all other indices of socioeconomic development. As

a result, the contest for a share in the benefits of nationhood is seen, to a certain extent, as lying between ethnic groupings. Disadvantaged peoples frequently point to the "machinations" of a dominant ethnic/regional group in order to explain why they have themselves fared poorly in the competition for office, influence and resources. There appear, therefore, to be two key determinants of ethnic allegiance that help to explain the variable intensity with which perceived ethnocultural distinctions are felt in this regard: recognition of a shared economic or political interest and perceptions of economic or political inequality.⁴⁰

In Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, economic disparities are related to the distribution of natural resources, the policies of the European authorities in the colonial period and the activities of successive governments in the post-Independence era. On the whole, these factors tended to combine to favour those groups that were already ascendant economically. The preferential allocation of government revenue, colonial as well as postcolonial, to certain areas resulted in a sense of grievance—even of exclusion from the political system—in the most disadvantaged regions. Thus, to illustrate with one locality that is particularly pertinent to this study, unlike the more central areas of Ghana occupied by the Akan subgroupings, the Volta Region, home of the Ewe, is not well-endowed with agricultural or mineral resources. Although schools in the area are quite numerous, few Ewes have been able to afford the technical school and university fees that lead to economic advancement and a professional career. As will be argued in Chapter 3, this was a reason why the military, which was seen as one alternative avenue of upward social mobility, appealed to so many Ewes. Another example of perceived injustice that took on a territorial and ethnic dimension was the opposition to Nkrumah's cocoa policy. There were strong complaints that Ashanti cocoa was being used to develop Accra to the detriment of development in Kumasi and the Ashanti Region. Finally, there have been frequent protests from the Gur-speaking population that the north of Ghana has been consistently neglected by successive governments since the early 1950s.

These regional dissatisfactions were channeled through the Togoland Congress (TC), which appealed to the Ewe sense of being economically ignored and which sought to preserve a distinctive Ewe identity; the Northern People's Party (NPP), which articulated the development demands of the backward North; and the National Liberation Movement (NLM), which was animated by grievances relating to inadequate representation, low cocoa prices and insufficient development projects.

To sum up: differentiations originating from the degree of economic and educational development cumulate with traditional differences. The stress on the latter acts as a means of expressing the resentment concerning disequilibria and inequalities caused by the former.⁴¹ Ethnic tensions always have a relative character and they assume different meanings and intensities according to an individual's (or group's) definition of the situation. If all the above helps to explain ethnicity, tribe and region as a basis of common

identification and differentiation in the larger social environment, it will be appreciated that such sources of cohesion and cleavage are likely to be evident within the institutions of society—especially in new states where primordial affiliations remain strong, and even more so in organisations that have had little time to develop a corporate sense of identity and loyalty. It is a contention of this book that one such body was the Ghanaian military establishment, the boundaries of which were penetrated by, and susceptible to, the politics of ethnic particularism.

Propositions, Sources and Methods

Awareness of the wider domestic setting in which the armed forces are located is important in understanding the internal nature and dynamics of the military. For descriptions of military structure and the social origins of soldiers are of limited utility if not related to the context of the social and political system. In the preceding section, therefore, we concentrated on some of the more salient aspects of the sociopolitical environment. We shall now, however, return to the historical timescale, central purposes and basic propositions which form the substance of the present work.

This book is a study of the Ghanaian Army during the decade beginning 1957. It spans the time from Ghana's Independence on 6 March 1957, through the night of 23/24 February 1966 (when Nkrumah's CPP was replaced by an army-police junta), to April in the following year. But in order to accomplish the task at hand, we begin by tracing the development of the military from its inception as an instrument of imperial power in the nineteenth century to its establishment as a national army sixty years later. The study ends with the abortive counter-coup against the National Liberation Council (NLC) in 1967—a fitting conclusion since, as Chapter 11 attempts to establish, that event marks a natural *dénouement* to arguments presented in earlier parts of this analysis.

It should be stressed at the outset that this endeavour has certain boundaries. As previously noted, we are concerned, primarily, with the army officer corps and not with the armed forces as a whole. Nevertheless, because Nkrumah's military policy involved the creation of naval and air forces, the development of these services is covered in Chapter 4. Material on the police force is also included (mostly in Chapters 7 and 9) because that service played a key part in the 1966 coup. Their training and deployment in the internal security role was similar to that of the army and in several respects their grievances under the CPP regime coincided with those of their army colleagues. Data on the army rank-and-file are incorporated (in Chapter 2) because it is from the ranks that the first African officers were drawn.⁴²

Three major aims about the events of the period lie at the centre of this investigation. The first of these is to examine the composition and structure of the army as measured against local indices of social stratification. This aspect is not only of interest from a sociological perspective in its

own right; it is also valuable in any effort to illuminate political transactions between military and society. The second purpose is to chart the rate and impact of institutional transfer and indigenisation on the organisational stability of the army establishment. It will be seen that these processes were exceedingly complex since their consequences—for the army's internal structure as well as in a wider political context—were not always immediately apparent. The final goal is to provide an historical analysis and interpretation of the relationship between the CPP regime and the contemporary military forces. For the most part, these three emphases are not examined separately; instead, they are integrated into a continuous chronological sequence.

The fundamental argument of this study is that institutional aberrations in the army, and their effect in destroying the inherited pattern of civilian control, can be traced to the precipitous expulsion of expatriate officers. This action was itself related to questions of national status and Nkrumah's ambitions in foreign policy affairs (Chapters 4 and 5). It was also rooted in the recruitment practices of the British military authorities in colonial times (Chapters 2 and 3). To fill the vacated posts, the president was forced to speed up and complete localisation (Chapter 6); but because of suspected disloyalties in the African officer corps, this had the effect of rendering the regime vulnerable to its own security services. The dilemma between wanting a national army on the one hand and one that could be trusted on the other ultimately became the crucial factor in CPP military policy, for it determined to a greater extent than any other the changing nature of civil-military relations (Chapter 7), the 1966 *coup d'état* (Chapters 8 and 9), a major redistribution of power in the domestic polity (Chapter 10) as well as further internal upheavals in the military establishment (Chapters 11 and 12).

This study was started in October 1973 at the London School of Economics. It grew out of earlier and more limited research on Colonel Acheampong's 1972 coup.⁴³ The Michaelmas term was spent in London in general background reading and preparation for the field research. Because of the then recent armed intervention (January 1972) and the sensitive nature of the work, no immediate attempt was made to obtain high-level approval from the Ghanaian government for the project. Instead, letters of introduction—stressing the historical rather than the political aspects of the research—were obtained from Dr Ann Bohm who was at that time Secretary of LSE's Graduate School.

The fieldwork on which this investigation is based was carried out in Accra and its environs (six months based at the Institute of Management and Public Administration at Greenhill, near Achimota), Kumasi (five weeks living near Second Brigade Headquarters and the fort's military museum) and Tamale (just a few days at the government catering rest house) from January to June 1974 and July to August 1975. During these periods, the writer was attached to Ghana University's Political Science Department. For some months in 1974, however, following the fatal shooting of a student by soldiers, the campus was closed by the military authorities. On the

return visit, a friend kindly provided accommodation at his bungalow in the capital. For a variety of reasons, including familiarity with contacts cultivated previously but especially because official clearance and aid was obtained through Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) F.W.K. Akuffo, the second trip to West Africa yielded as much, if not more, written and oral evidence than the longer initial stay.

The intention was to obtain official documentary material and gather information and attitudinal data on the structure, role and activities of the army. Many official primary materials, including reports of commissions of enquiry, departmental recommendations, government statements, annual economic surveys, estimates and so forth, were available in libraries. Others were obtained directly from the appropriate ministry, office or bureau. Some important material was recovered from the Defence Ministry's record office located at Burma Camp, Accra.

At first, requests for information at the Ministry of Defence (MOD) were closely invigilated and papers only produced for scrutiny if an officer was present. But after a while, rooms were sometimes left at this writer's disposal so that a certain amount of unsupervised searches was permitted. Unfortunately, Ghanaians do not share the British enthusiasm for maintaining ordered files and there were frequent gaps that had to be pieced together from alternative sources. However, what was lacking in quantity was substituted for in quality: two of the most useful (but most difficult to obtain) dossiers were *The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967* and *List of Senior Retired Officers, 1976*, acquired from the Military Secretary's office and Military Intelligence respectively. These and other Gold Coast/Ghana documents consulted are listed in section D of the Bibliography. They constitute the raw materials for much of the data collated in the 24 tables and 4 appendixes. It should be recorded that no restriction or qualification was placed at any time as to what conclusions could be drawn from these sources.

This book's reliance on primary sources is also evidenced from a perusal of British papers and reports compiled in section E. Many War Office and some Colonial Office papers were examined in the United Kingdom at the Public Records Office, Kew. For obvious reasons relating to the thirty-year rule, these materials were mainly of use in Chapter 2 which deals with the origins and history of the Gold Coast Regiment, the precursor of the Ghana Army. Apart from these memoranda, letters and telegrams, a great deal of data was unearthed from more accessible sources including *The Army Lists* for the years 1951-1967 and *The Colonial Empire, 1939-1947*, both Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) publications. Some useful documents were also obtained through the Defence Adviser's office at the British High Commission, Accra.

Section A of the Bibliography records the names of ninety-six individuals interviewed by the author. Of the fifty-seven military interviewees whose names appear, two were British and one was American. The rest were Ghanaian nationals. Several British officers requested anonymity. A major

effort was made to see personnel whose recruitment, postings and experience made it likely that they could illuminate issues relevant to this project. Thus, the high representation of, or bias towards, ranking officers is because the period covered is 1957–1967 when many of these individuals occupied less elevated positions. In short, despite initial appearances to the contrary, the list depicts a very fair cross-section (as well as a high proportion) of the officer corps for the years reviewed here. The jobs or appointments of officers and civilians are those obtaining at the time of interview; where it seems important, previous and subsequent postings are identified in the main text. Included in the military schedule are two former heads of state, several ex-Chiefs of Defence Staff and former service commanders, as well as many officers who have held posts in one or more of Ghana's five military administrations. Some of these men were executed following summary trials under Rawlings's Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in 1979.

Of the thirty-nine civilian interviewees, thirty-six were Ghanaian and three—two diplomats from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and a former Director of Studies at Ghana's Military Academy—were British. Included in the civilian group are individuals who were knowledgeable about events during the Nkrumah years: ministers, MPs, diplomats, senior civil servants, businessmen, academics and newspaper editors and journalists.

Interviews with public servants tended to follow a set procedure. A letter of introduction with a request for an appointment would be taken by hand to the appropriate government ministry. A few days later, the request would normally, but not always, be granted. The interview itself usually lasted an hour or more. Notes would be taken which were then expanded, while memories remained fresh, with the aid of a tape-recorder left in the car nearby. In all cases, explanations or assertions of fact obtained by this method (which were sometimes, no doubt, intended to distort the truth and place the interviewee in a favourable light but from which much could be construed) were checked against official records or against other informants. Wherever feasible, these sources have been identified but in a very few cases this was not possible without breaking commitments.

The formal interviews were supplemented by observational data gathered from personal acquaintance—in the mess, at private homes and at popular nightspots and bars. Details relating to lifestyle, leisure activities, relationships, political dispositions and much else were recorded in a diary. Together with more formal liaisons, these provided much first-hand experience which formed an important, albeit unsystematic, part of the research programme.

Recourse to newspapers, whether British or Ghanaian, was made only when unavoidable. Where the press was the origin of supposedly factual information, this was compared with alternative sources. However, readings of the papers and magazines itemised in section G should not be undervalued for they frequently provided valuable insight into salient political patterns as well as a feel for the local culture. Sections B and C list the books, pamphlets and articles referred to. Unpublished theses and ancillary manuscripts are recorded in part F of the Bibliography.

Notes

1. See, for instance, H. Daalder, *The Role of the Military in Emerging Countries* ('S-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1962); J.J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962); and W.F. Gutteridge, *The Military in African Politics* (London: Methuen, 1969).

2. For a more detailed discussion of these conflicting theories, see A.R. Luckham, "A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations," *Government and Opposition* 6,1 (Winter 1971), pp.5-9.

3. A.R. Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-67* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); and T.S. Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

4. R.E. Dowse, "The Military and Political Development," in C. Leys (ed.), *Politics and Change in Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.246.

5. Some material is available in W.F. Gutteridge, "Military Elites in Nigeria and Ghana," *African Forum* 2,1 (Summer 1966), pp.93-103; and S.J. Baynham, "Soldier and State in Ghana," *Armed Forces and Society* 5,1 (Fall 1978), pp.155-168.

6. D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). See, too, H. Bretton, *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Pall Mall, 1966); B. Fitch and M. Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966); T. Jones, *Ghana's First Republic, 1960-1966* (London: Methuen, 1976); and R. Rathbone, "Ghana," in J. Dunn (ed.), *West African States: Failure and Promise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp.22-35.

7. M. Janowitz, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1959), p.8.

8. S.P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), p.194.

9. According to E.A. Nordlinger, "The external or 'environmental' variables include the actions of civilian executives, the performance and legitimacy of civilian governments, the politicization of workers and peasants, the severity of communal conflicts, the extent of socioeconomic modernization, and the rate of economic growth." *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p.xi.

10. S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall, 1962), Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

11. For a fuller account of civilian opposition to military intervention, see A. Roberts, "Civil Resistance to Military Coups," *Journal of Peace Research* XII,1 (1975), pp.19-36.

12. The notion of a boundary between the army and its environment is one used with some skill by Luckham, *The Nigerian Military*. Elsewhere, in his "Typology of Civil-Military Relations," he develops a theory of civil-military relations around the concept of military organisations and their boundaries.

13. E.M. Kirkpatrick, "The Impact of the Behavioural Approach on Traditional Political Science," in A. Ranney (ed.), *Essays on the Behavioural Study of Politics* (Boston, D.C.: Heath, 1962), p.12.

14. For the period reviewed here, see W. Birmingham, I. Neustadt and E.N. Omaboe (eds.), *A Study of Contemporary Ghana, Vol. I, The Economy of Ghana* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966); and D. Rimmer, "The Crisis in the Ghana

Economy," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 4,1 (May 1966), pp.17-32. Official Ghanaian sources include *Economic Survey and Quarterly Digest of Statistics*.

15. Of course, there is considerable semantic confusion and a lack of consensus among social scientists in Western society about the meaning of class. On this, see S. Cotgrove, *The Science of Society* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967), p.210.

16. P.C. Lloyd, *Classes, Crises and Coups* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971), p.13.

17. Whilst conceding that rudimentary or incipient classes may be emerging in Africa, the liberal school argues that the concept of class is inappropriate for the sub-Saharan case. Lloyd, for example, agrees that there is some basis for viewing African elites in class terms, but he maintains that this does not support the existence of a class system as such. For one thing, in the West African context at least, social classes cannot be defined in terms of ownership of the means of production because most members of the elite are salary earners and it is the peasants who are the corporate owners of land: "Furthermore, whilst the elite has the cohesion, the consciousness of privilege and distinct style of life to merit the term class, it is not balanced by another recognisable class . . ." (P.C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972], p.315.)

Lloyd proceeds to argue that a social class can only exist in a system of classes (with which no Marxist would disagree), that such a system of classes has not yet been identified and that in any case no class system can be expected to develop within a social structure that remains "open," allowing members of society to compete freely (albeit unequally) for positions of power, privilege and prestige.

In contradistinction, therefore, to the class approach, Lloyd and others present an alternative model which insists that a power elite comprising the top people from the military, political parties, the bureaucracy and the financial and commercial world dominates the political scene.

18. The Marxist focus on the notion of a ruling class has led to attempts to identify the personnel of the governing group and to explain their functions as expressions of economic interests. For Marx, the key is to be found in the individual's relation to the means of production. Those who own productive resources such as factories, capital and land are contrasted with those who have only their labour to sell. But it is worth noting (as R. Jeffries has in his *Class, Power and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978], p.169) that a classical Marxist interpretation of the political role of African industrial wage-earners is far from universally accepted among modern Marxian theorists. Indeed, Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul maintain that skilled workers have joined forces with the post-Independence elites in expropriating the economic surplus generated by the rural peasantry. These workers, together with the elites and sub-elites in bureaucratic employment in the public service, constitute what they style the "labour aristocracy" of Tropical Africa (*Essays on the Political Economy of Africa* [New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973], p.230).

Deviation from the classical Marxist model, as well as the complexity of class analysis in the African context, is also revealed in other studies devoted to social stratification in Africa. For instance, Immanuel Wallerstein has focused on two main dimensions of class structure: the process of class formation and the development of class-consciousness. Arguing that the nature of class interests and class conflicts can only be comprehended within the framework of a capitalist world economy, he asserts that the primary contradiction in the peripheral areas of the world is not between two groups inside a state but "between the interests organised and located in the core countries and their local allies on the one hand, and the majority

of the population on the other" ("Class and Class-Conflict in Contemporary Africa," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7,3 [1973], pp.375-380). These local allies, Robin Cohen's indigenous bureaucratic and commercial bourgeoisies ("The State in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 5 [Jan-April 1976], p.1), are concerned, primarily, to maximise the benefits gained from collaboration with foreign capital rather than to challenge its domination. Hence Magubane's view that an understanding of Africa's class structure must commence with an enquiry into "the degree of exploitation of African resources and labour and must proceed to follow the surplus to its destination outside Africa—into the bank accounts of the world capitalist class" ("The Evolution of the Class Structure in Africa," in P.C.W. Gutkind and I. Wallerstein [eds.], *The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa* [London: Sage, 1976], p.181).

Other writers, unwilling to adhere to an over-rigid interpretation of Marx's concept of class, in the African context, talk of "proto-classes" or "semi-classes." One such is Szymon Chodak who believes that elite and bureaucratic groups, as well as peasants and workers, manifest some class features, but have not as yet developed into clearly separate social classes ("Introduction," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7,3 [1973], pp.371-374). In his essay, "Les travailleurs ruraux du Mayombe, Ebauche d'une classe sociale?" in the same issue, André Lux also finds it necessary to qualify his use of the term class and speaks of "quasi-classes in the making": p.433.

19. And at this stage it seems proper to anticipate our approach by emphasising that—while the singular use of the term elite crops up occasionally in the text—we are not suggesting the existence of a single elite, coherent and interconnected. Rather, the word is used to describe a set of fragmented (although overlapping) elite factions competing for high office or for access to those in positions of power.

20. S.F. Nadel, "The Concept of Social Elites," *International Social Science Bulletin* 8, 3 (1956), p.417. C. Wright Mills makes a similar point; for him, "The elite who occupy the command posts may be seen as the possessors of . . . celebrity." *The Power Elite* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p.13.

21. For a more detailed treatment of these points, see P.C. Lloyd, *Classes, Crises and Coups*, Chapter 1.

22. "Ghana," in Dunn (ed.), *West African States*, p.32. Rathbone's meaning is clear but the metaphor is false—it is ants which milk aphids; ladybirds eat them.

23. *Africa in Social Change*, p.125.

24. T. Kerstiens, *The New Elite in Asia and Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p.9.

25. R.A. Miller, "Elite Formation in Africa: Class, Culture and Coherence," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12,4 (December 1974), p.522.

26. Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.xiii.

27. *Ibid.*, p.13.

28. For the early history of the intelligentsia leaders of the Gold Coast, see D.B. Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana, 1850-1928* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

29. P. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), has produced a detailed analysis of this elite in which he defines the extent to which it was "open" and relates this to recruitment, mobility, etc.

30. "The Evolution of Elites in Ghana," in P.C. Lloyd (ed.), *The New Elites of Tropical Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.111.

31. E. Hutchful, *Military Rule and the Politics of Demilitarization in Ghana, 1966-1969*, Toronto University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1973, p.29.
32. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 14,1 (March 1976), p.3.
33. K.A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p.117.
34. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change*, p.337.
35. This, in turn, has led to attempts to integrate horizontal and vertical divisions in a single model such as Austin's stepped pyramid. The main slopes of the structure are the ethnic solidarities; a cross-section through the pyramid at a particular echelon can be defined by wealth, occupation and education. "Introduction," in D. Austin and R. Luckham (eds.), *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana, 1966-1972* (London: Frank Cass, 1975), pp.8-10.
36. One of the best volumes on the cultural heterogeneity of the country is provided by P. Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974).
37. P. Mercier, "On the Meaning of Tribalism in Africa," in P. van den Berghe (ed.), *Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), p.493.
38. P. Lloyd, "The Ethnic Background to the Nigerian Crisis," in S.K. Panter-Brick (ed.), *Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), p.5.
39. See, for instance, Rathbone in Dunn (ed.), *West African States*, pp.27-28.
40. M. Cross, "Colonialism and Ethnicity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1,1 (January 1978), p.42.
41. Mercier, "Tribalism in Africa," p.492.
42. However, a systematic treatment of the ordinary soldiers is not offered here. With regard to the colonial era, that task has been admirably tackled by D. Killingray, *The Colonial Army in the Gold Coast: Official Policy and Local Response, 1890-1947*, London University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1982.
43. S.J. Baynham, *The Military in African Politics: Colonel Acheampong's Coup*, Exeter University, M.A. dissertation, 1975.

2

The Gold Coast Military Forces: Origins, Composition and Structure

The military establishments of former British West Africa trace their origins to the constabularies commissioned by trading companies and colonial administrators for internal security duties in the latter part of the nineteenth century. With the advent of the Ashanti Wars and fears of French colonial expansion in West Africa, the forces from the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia were amalgamated under Lugard in 1897 on the orders of Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to form the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) and were given legal recognition in 1901.¹

The Force was initially based in Nigeria, mainly because of the existence of the longstanding Lagos, Royal Niger and Oil Rivers Constabularies, but the regional HQ was later moved to Accra. Although the Force was a regional one, its four constituent parts, the Nigeria Regiment, the Gold Coast Regiment, the Sierra Leone Battalion and the Gambia Company, were territorially recruited.² This was the case even in wartime, when control over the four units was transferred from the Colonial Office to the War Office. As a consequence of this policy of "territorialisation," the military formations in each dependency were able to preserve substantial organisational continuity, and as each colony moved towards Independence it had its own embryonic national army.

In the first years of its history, the RWAFF was used as the constabularies had largely been employed before, for expeditions to establish and secure British rule on the frontiers of empire. After the Ashanti War of 1900, the Force served mainly in northern Nigeria and inevitably left behind memories of punitive activities which were to affect, years later, the attitudes of local peoples to the military. During the two world wars, RWAFF units were successfully deployed outside West Africa. One question which then surrounded these events was whether the West African colonial armies should be viewed primarily as an imperial defence force, or whether they should be used strictly in the defence of their own territories.

Two other factors were important in the raising and subsequent development of these formations. The first of these was the preference for warrior

tribesmen from remote regions who would be reliable when serious internal security problems arose. Experience in India had led the British to believe that some ethnic groups were inherently fit for soldiering. These factors led the authorities to recruit soldiers from areas far removed from extensive colonial economic activity. Unfortunately, this policy was largely responsible for the poor reputation of these units and for their image as a haven for illiterates and social misfits. This was to have lasting consequences on the army's social composition.

The second general issue concerns the question of Africanisation. British policy eventually envisaged the separate development of colonial dependencies to self-government and Independence. Naturally this raised the question of commissioning locals in the RWAFF—a process that gained momentum in the Gold Coast following the 1948 disturbances and the advent, in 1951, of Nkrumah's first administration. Nevertheless, the rate of indigenisation in the army officer corps contrasted dramatically with developments within the civil service. With the withdrawal of the metropolitan authority in March 1957, twenty-nine Ghanaians had been commissioned. This represented only 12 percent of the officer ranks.

Origins and Early History of the Gold Coast Regiment

Although the forerunner of the present day Ghana Army was not legally constituted until 1901 when it was named the Gold Coast Regiment (GCR), its origins had their beginning much earlier than this. In 1662, a charter was given by Charles II to the Company of Royal Adventurers for the purpose of trading from Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope. Ten years later, this Company was succeeded by the Royal Africa Company, which built forts along the Gold Coast. Garrisons were maintained, recruited from West Africans, with a small proportion of Europeans, for defence against hostile locals. Later, the Royal Africa Company was followed by the African Company of Merchants, whose Gold Coast settlements were taken over by the Crown in 1822. Soon after, the Governor, Sir Charles MacCarthy, reorganised the garrisons into a regiment of three companies entitled the Royal African Corps of Light Infantry. Militia and Volunteer Corps were formed about the same time with the object of preventing raids from the Ashanti tribe. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, defence of local British interests on the West African coast also depended on the Royal Navy, whose marines were frequently employed in punitive excursions against recalcitrant natives, and the West India Regiment, whose personnel were assumed to be more resistant to disease and cheaper to maintain than whites.

1873 saw the beginning of the sixth Ashanti War (the first five occurred between 1803 and 1863) when the invasion of an army from Kumasi threatened to capture Elmina. Under the command of Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the British employed some 12,000 of their own troops, approximately 600 men from the West India Regiment and several hundred

Lagos Constabulary in the advance on Kumasi. The conflict is of interest because the British used the Fanti against the Ashanti and because local levies took part in a campaign outside their own territory. In consequence, a precedent had been established in which soldiers were recruited from areas removed from colonial interest for the subjugation of natives who were in conflict with the metropolitan power. Years later, as far forward as the 1950s, this was to influence the pattern of recruitment into the Ghana Army.

After the campaign, about 300 Lagos Hausas remained behind to form the nucleus of the Gold Coast Constabulary which was raised in 1897 with sixteen European officers and 1,203 Africans.³ It retained this designation until its incorporation in the RWAFF as the Gold Coast Regiment. The influence of the warlike Ashanti was of critical importance in creating the need for strong military forces to defend the territory from Ashanti encroachment.⁴

In 1897, Joseph Chamberlain, who had been appointed Colonial Secretary two years earlier, took steps to raise a regular military force—the West African Frontier Force, familiarly known as the WAFF, pronounced “Woff.” French territorial ambitions in West Africa provided the impetus behind the consolidation of British forces in the area. In the event of war, British seapower was confidently expected to prevent a European enemy from supplying local African forces or using the coast as a base for an attack in India.⁵ In London, much controversy centred on whether the RWAFF should be used for imperial purposes elsewhere in the Empire, but a firm decision was made restricting the use of West African troops to West Africa and the Force was put under Colonial Office control.

Although Lord Selbourne’s Interdepartmental Committee on Amalgamation of Military Forces in West Africa recommended the formal integration of the RWAFF by colonies in June 1899, the recommendation—which had the object of consolidating British influence on the coast—was not implemented until August 1901. The RWAFF was a regular unit recruited from a nucleus of officers and men of the Royal Nigerian Constabulary, the Niger Coast Constabulary, the Gold Coast Constabulary and the Sierra Leone Frontier Police. No constabulary existed in the Gambia as material for a RWAFF unit prior to 1902. These forces were reorganised into six battalions, divided into forty-five companies and distributed as follows: First and Second Battalions constituted the Northern Nigeria Regiment; Third Battalion, the Southern Nigeria Regiment; Fourth Battalion, the Gold Coast Regiment; Fifth Battalion, the Sierra Leone Regiment; and the Lagos Battalion was formed from the Sixth Battalion. As with other British units, the RWAFF had a high proportion of officers to men—147 to 6,308. The Gold Coast Regiment had thirty-three officers and 1,657 Other Ranks (ORs).⁶ The officers and most senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were British. However, there were a few “native officers” risen from the ranks; for all intents and purposes, they were equivalent to senior warrant officers (WOs). The administrative integration of the West African Frontier Force was

completed with the appointment of Major-General G.V. Kemball as Inspector-General. His HQ was located at the Colonial Office in London.

The RWAFF's immediate function was to cope with disturbances like the "Hut Tax" revolt of 1898 in Sierra Leone. Other operations included overcoming opposition from local tribes in the Niger Valley, preventing raids by chiefs and emirs in the Illoh, Argungu and Lapai areas and expeditions to ensure safe passage of caravans and to abolish the slave trade. But the main operations undertaken by the Force were in Ashanti where a large contingent of Nigerian troops was called upon to fight the final Ashanti War of 1900. As noted earlier, the RWAFF had even greater significance since it was intended also for general service in West Africa against an assumed French threat; at the same time, strategists viewed the defence of British possessions in West Africa in wider imperial terms.

By 1906, the Gold Coast Regiment had been reorganised as a battalion of eight companies and a battery. Headquarters, four companies and the battery were stationed at Kumasi; the remaining companies were stationed at Accra, Mampong, Nkoranza and Odumasi.

As the war with Germany drew nearer, the question of utilising greater numbers of African troops for wider imperial purposes was again raised. The eventual decision to use the RWAFF in offensive operations came in two stages. First, in 1911, the British Imperial General Staff established the principle that the forces of each territory throughout the Empire should be maintained and equipped on a level sufficient for self-defence. Then, in August 1914, a decision was taken to launch the Force against German possessions in Togoland and the Cameroons. So it was that the RWAFF was expanded at the beginning of World War I from approximately 7,200 men to nearly 30,000, the Gold Coast Regiment accounting for one third of this figure with 397 Europeans and 9,890 Africans.⁷

The campaign in Togoland began and ended in August 1914, but the Cameroons campaign lasted from August 1914 until February 1916. Once the Germans had been defeated in West Africa, RWAFF units (including 2,602 Gold Coasters) were dispatched to East Africa where their successes were so impressive that the War Office sought the recruitment of an African army to be used in Europe by the metropolitan power. These pressures were at first resisted and rebuffed by the Colonial Office, but by the end of 1917 manpower shortages and the possibility of a long drawn-out war resulted in a change of policy. A decision was taken to form a Gold Coast Brigade for service in Palestine; however, the cessation of hostilities in November 1918 prevented the plan from being put into operation.

Unlike the French, who used their possessions in Africa as the main colonial reservoir of military manpower, it was not until 1939 that the British began to draw substantially on her African colonies for troops. The French had always relied much more heavily on their colonies for manpower. African troops were used to fight France's wars in Europe and to conquer her colonies around the world well over a century before the British did the same. Conscription was introduced by the French in Africa in 1912;

this system of compulsory military service continued throughout and beyond World War I.⁸

Lord Lugard, who had pressed for the commitment of Africans as combatants and bearers outside the continent, was highly impressed by the loyalty and endurance exhibited by his black soldiers. The chief architect of British indirect rule described the typical African troops as "keen and courageous fighters, impulsive, obedient, and faithful, with implicit trust in their leaders. Under the best officers they are capable of becoming excellent troops in action."⁹ But despite the lavish praise, none qualified for advancement to officer status. It was not until the 1939-1945 war that a small number of Africans became officers under Britain's slow and gradual process of developing indigenous officer cadres when political conditions permitted.

During the early 1920s, the RWAFF settled down to peacetime soldiering again. After the post-war reductions, the Gold Coast Regiment consisted of an HQ, one infantry battalion organised in four companies and a battery. The stations of the Regiment at this period were Tamale, Kumasi, Accra and Kintampo. During 1933, the RWAFF was reorganised and expanded. In Nigeria, the four battalions were transformed into six battalions of two companies and a machine-gun section each. Similar adjustments were introduced in the Gold Coast where the infantry was reconstituted into two battalions. These and other changes were in response to the increased likelihood of war, particularly after Mussolini's attack on Abyssinia in October 1935.

As the threat of hostilities grew, the potential value of African soldiers as an imperial force to be deployed outside Africa was raised once again. Political developments in Egypt and India, as well as the growing importance of Middle East oil, meant an increase in Africa's strategic value. The issue reopened important differences between the War Office, which had a global view of imperial defence requirements, and the Colonial Office, which held to the view that a primary function of the African colonial forces was internal security. A letter from the War Office proposed the complete reorganisation of African colonial armies:

What I contemplated was that the War Office should take over the permanent Local Forces, i.e. RWAFF and KAR [King's African Rifles], lock stock and barrel, and be responsible not only for command, organisation, and training . . . but also for administration. . . . In fact the troops would pass entirely into our control.¹⁰

In a secret joint memorandum by the War Office and the Colonial Office on the system of defence organisation in the colonial dependencies of East and West Africa, the Colonial Office held to the view that the RWAFF and KAR should continue to be

recruited and paid for by the Colonial Dependencies concerned. Officers and NCOs are lent to them from the Regular Army. Their control is primarily a matter for the Colonial Governments, but general supervision and coor-

dination of this training and administration is secured by the Inspector-General, RWAFF and KAR, an officer of the Regular Army responsible to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹¹

To which the War Office replied that "the direct supervision of these important military forces by the Colonial Office is a relic of the past and not in accordance with modern ideas of coordinated Imperial Defence."¹² Once again a demand was made for the transfer of responsibility for these local military forces to the War Office.

By early 1938, agreement was reached that, in an emergency, control of the African colonial forces should pass to the War Office. This transfer of responsibility actually occurred on 1 September 1939.¹³ The post of Inspector-General was abolished, and Lt.-General G.J. Giffard was appointed the first General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, West Africa. In July 1940, he set up his HQ at Achimota College in the Gold Coast. A secret letter from the Colonial Office had earlier revealed that, in order to implement such an arrangement, the West African dependencies would have to maintain forces on a scale "much in excess of what may be called their domestic requirements."¹⁴ Nevertheless, correspondence between the Colonial Office and the War Office's Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence reveals that, although African forces could theoretically be used anywhere in the world, "it is highly unlikely that they will be used outside Africa."¹⁵

In the event, this prediction proved to be faulty. Within a year of the outbreak of war, the fall of France, and subsequent Vichy alignment of French Africa, meant that British West Africa was threatened. And with the Mediterranean closed to the Allies, the strategic importance of West and East Africa as supply bases was vastly emphasised. With the outbreak of hostilities, the strength of the RWAFF was raised from a pre-war level of 8,000, to 50,000 by 1941. This grew to 100,000 in 1942, and to 146,000 in 1945. Altogether over 372,000 men (200,000 from West Africa), including carriers and porters, were enlisted from Britain's African colonies. Of this number, 166,000 served outside their home territories, half of them in Burma. These figures should be compared with those of the inter-war period, when there had been only 19,000 African soldiers in the whole of British Africa.¹⁶

Gold Coast troops, under the command of British officers and British and African NCOs, fought within Africa in the Abyssinian campaign against the Italians where they distinguished themselves at El Wak, Wadara and elsewhere.¹⁷ By early 1944, the Gold Coast Regiment saw further action in India and Burma as part of the famous 81st and 82nd (West African) Divisions. The GCR contributed six of its regiments—the First, Second, Third, Fifth, Seventh and Eighth—to these operations; the other regiments—the Fourth, Sixth and Ninth—remained in West Africa. As had been the case in 1914–1918, the RWAFF units showed great devotion to duty and many instances of gallantry. The men who carried loads by head in traditional African style played a vital role in the Burma campaign, allowing the 81st and 82nd to move across country that a non-African division could not

contemplate. Viscount Slim paid considerable tribute to these soldiers in his account of the campaign, but he was critical that there were so few African officers, WOs and NCOs.¹⁸

Tentative plans for the partial Africanisation of the officer corps had, however, been set in motion. In 1939, immediately before the outbreak of war, the Governor of the Gold Coast suggested that the time had come to grant Africans commissions in the RWAFF. A scheme was worked out that educated Africans, recommended by carefully stipulated persons, should be enlisted in the Gold Coast Regiment as cadets. But although twelve cadets enlisted, only two stayed the course, and in 1941 one of these was rejected, leaving only Sergeant Seth K. Antony, an Old Achimotan, to complete the course in England. He was eventually (April 1942) awarded an emergency commission, returning from Burma in 1946 as a temporary major.¹⁹

Developments After World War II

Even before the war ended, discussions began in Whitehall on the purpose and role of the African forces following the cessation of hostilities. Proposals ranged from the total integration of colonial armies in an imperial defence scheme (thus filling the gap left by the Indian Army) under continued War Office control, to a return to the pre-September 1939 system. Eventually, Clement Attlee's Labour government decided on a reduction in the African colonial forces and their reversion to Colonial Office jurisdiction in 1947. The idea of an African army playing a key role in a global scheme of imperial defence was abandoned, for it was soon clear that constitutional changes in Africa would impinge on military matters.

Reduction of the RWAFF began in 1946. Nigeria's fourteen battalions were scaled down to four; but within a few months its Fifth Battalion was reconstituted. All the war-time battalions in the Gold Coast were disbanded, leaving two. However, the Third Battalion was restored again after the civil disturbances in 1948. Only the First Battalion remained in Sierra Leone, and in the Gambia just one company. The war-time RWAFF training school at Teshie, near Accra, was retained to ensure common methods of training in the Force. HQ West Africa Command continued at Accra.

By 1945, there were 63,038 men from the Gold Coast in the armed services of whom 41,888 had served overseas—roughly 6,000 in East Africa, 5,500 in the Middle East and 3,500 in Burma.²⁰ As in 1918, the return of Gold Coast troops in 1945 presented major problems of rehabilitation for the administration, raising speculation as to the disturbing influence the dislocations and experiences of fighting abroad might have.²¹ At the start of the war, the British colonial authorities were largely unconcerned with the possible long-range results of large-scale mobilisation; however, by the end of the war considerable official concern existed about the impact of rapid military demobilisation and readjustment in the post-war economy. Committees for demobilisation were established in all British colonies, and

in 1944 arrangements were made to further the resettlement of discharged soldiers. Officers in charge of units were given instructions to explain the contents of a booklet called *Release and Resettlement*. This and other pamphlets on the subject were widely circulated to units overseas (mainly in the Indian sub-continent and Burma) and in West Africa itself.

British demobilisation plans expressed the hope that most Africans would return to their villages, but there was much anxiety about those who would no longer be satisfied with traditional rural life. Meyer Fortes did not think the demobilised men would have much influence on the social pattern in "tribal areas" where they would be reabsorbed into their own communities. But "In the towns, where there is no coherent social structure, and where the ferment of change is working rapidly, literate demobilised soldiers might attach themselves to the more extreme politicians if they are unemployed."²²

The difficulties which eventually arose were mainly due to the fact that so many of the troops, having been looked after by the army on active service, found the return to civilian life irksome:

The large number of African soldiers returning from service with the Forces, where they had lived under different and better conditions, made for a general communicable state of unrest. Such Africans by reason of their contacts with other peoples including Europeans had developed a political and national consciousness. The fact that they were disappointed at conditions on their return, either from specious promises made before demobilisation or a general expectancy of a golden age for heroes, made them the natural focal point for any general movement against authority.²³

A factor that aggravated the situation was the decline in living standards.²⁴ Crowder has argued that the war experience acted as a powerful catalyst on the social and political outlook of the servicemen, for it had shattered the myth of imperial impregnability and white supremacy:

Africans had fought alongside white men, killed white men, seen brave Africans and white cowards, slept with white women, met white soldiers who treated them as equals, or who were, like themselves, hardly educated. They had visited new countries, seen people like the Indians living in squalor and poverty such as they had never seen at home. Above all, having fought in the defence of freedom, they considered it their right that they should have some share in the government of their land. . . . It is hardly surprising, then, that ex-soldiers . . . were to play a leading role in the ranks of the political parties which were formed to take advantage of the constitutional reforms made at the end of the war.²⁵

British colonial officials were fully aware that the ex-servicemen were a potentially disruptive force, and efforts were made to ensure their peaceful integration. Most planning centred around jobs. Employment offices were opened for soldiers; trade centres and courses were instituted. Up to the end of September 1947, 38,098 had registered for employment and 19,336 had been found jobs.²⁶ Such measures were only partially successful since

a great many soldiers remained unemployed. Given these and other grievances noted below, as well as for sentimental reasons, it is hardly surprising that a number of ex-servicemen's associations were set up. Sometimes these were officially recognised organisations such as the Gold Coast Legion with a membership of 30,000 or so. Several smaller unofficial bodies were also set up. Most of them agitated for higher pensions and improved job opportunities. Demands were also made for a provision exempting all former soldiers from payment of state levies for a period of five years. Complaints about the slow progress of Africanisation in the RWAFF were also aired.²⁷ However, the only veterans' organisation of real political significance was the Gold Coast Ex-Servicemen's Union.

The Union was formed in 1946, based on the antecedents of a small group which had functioned after World War I from 1920 to 1935.²⁸ It had a reputed membership of 6,650. Although gratuities, ranging from about £14 for a private to £30 for a senior NCO, were paid to the demobilised soldiers (the military authorities had opened 30,000 accounts for ex-servicemen's war gratuities with a total deposit of £1.2 million), the Union's members had numerous grievances. The principal sources of discontent were related to high unemployment among ex-soldiers, the shortage of housing accommodation in Accra and the other main urban areas and the high cost of living. The colonial administration had hoped that the returning troops, many of whom had learned new skills as artisans and technicians during their service and who therefore seem to have expected preferential treatment in the form of jobs, would utilise their experience and training for economic and social development in the rural areas. In the event, the ex-servicemen tended not to return to their home villages but to settle in the towns and in particular the capital. They therefore formed a significant slice of Accra's immediate post-war population of around 125,000.

A particularly hard-hit section of the population, as one author has noted, was the drivers (many of them ex-servicemen) who complained of the difficulty of getting petrol except at black-market prices and of restrictive trade practices among the small Lebanese business community.²⁹ These grievances prompted several demonstrations in 1947; however, it was not until the following year that the Union made a significant impact on the politics of post-war African nationalism.

The nationalist agitation began in earnest during January 1948 with a boycott of European goods led by a businessman, Nii Kwabena Bonne. Supply shortages and high prices were the cause of the anti-inflation campaign which was initiated to bring about a reduction in the prices of essential commodities. Before the boycott ended, the Ex-Servicemen's Union, which was closely linked with the organisers of the boycott campaign and whose leaders were in close association with the United Gold Coast Convention, decided to present a petition setting out their grievances. A march to present the petition to the Governor at his official residence at Christiansborg Castle took place on 28 February. In the words of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry which investigated the disturbances,

"what had begun as an orderly procession . . . rapidly degenerated for the most part into a lawless mob."³⁰ At 3 p.m. the 2,000 Union members and their supporters were stopped at the Castle crossroads by a small detachment of police under Superintendent Imray.

In the conflict which resulted, Sergeant Adjetei, an ex-serviceman, together with another ringleader, were shot dead. Several others were wounded. According to the Report, looting had broken out before this affair but the incident increased the tempo of rioting. For the next two days, there were almost continuous clashes between troops and looters. Major-General C.R.A. Swynnerton decided that his local Gold Coast forces were not sufficient to cope with the disturbances. Early in March, therefore, four companies from the First and Third Battalions of the Nigeria Regiment were moved into Accra by air; another thousand troops went in by sea. There was only one incident in which the Nigerians had to use weapons; most of the time they were engaged in patrol and guard duties. By June, they were back at their own stations in Nigeria. Nevertheless, conditions did not return to anything like normal for several more weeks.

The widespread disorders that continued for several weeks throughout the Gold Coast marked not only the first surge of popular nationalist discontent; it also heralded a fundamental change in the balance of power, from the chiefs and educated intelligentsia, to the new group of educated commoners or "young men" who formed the backbone of Kwame Nkrumah's CPP. According to Schleh, some older members left the Union, but most decided that the best chance of alleviating their grievances lay in helping the politicians achieve an African government that would be amenable and sympathetic to ex-soldiers' problems.³¹ In June 1949, the alliance between the Gold Coast Ex-Servicemen's Union and the radical wing of the nationalist movement became official when Nkrumah declared the formation of his CPP. Support for ex-servicemen's aspirations from UGCC nationalist leaders, and the subsequent absorption of the Union by the CPP, represented the first sign of any interest in military affairs on the part of local African politicians.

The disturbances of 1948 clearly demonstrated that the Gold Coast was not capable on its own of ensuring the maintenance of law and order in times of crisis. One outcome of the riots was the establishment of the Coussey Commission, formed to recommend constitutional change.³² As a result, elections were held in February 1951 and Nkrumah was appointed leader of government business. These political changes in favour of internal self-government were soon followed by yet another enquiry into the organisation and future role of the colonial forces, culminating in a conference of War Office and West African government representatives at Lagos in April 1953.

Two topics were of overriding concern to the individuals attending the West African Forces Conference: firstly, the question of administrative control and future training and, secondly, the issue of financial responsibility. With the Gold Coast's run-up to Independence, a decision had to be made

whether or not to retain the supra-national military links between the four British West African possessions. Eventually, the four territories decided to enact legislation so that each of their forces should be separately named, whilst keeping the corporate title RWAFF.³³ The Gold Coast battalions were designated the Gold Coast Military Forces. One of the consequences of the achievement of self-government was that each of the colonies in their turn had to shoulder the full costs of their defence commitments, previously borne in the main by the British Exchequer. Financial responsibility for the Gold Coast forces was switched from London to Accra on 1 July 1956. Since British rule in the Gold Coast was ultimately based on the threat of coercion, the last functions transferred to African control with decolonisation were those connected with internal security. For this reason, final authority for the control of the army remained with the colonial Governor-General. In April 1958 and January 1959 respectively, Nigeria and Sierra Leone followed suit. The Gambia suspended its one company in order to improve its police force.

As a result of these moves to transform the constituent parts of the RWAFF into national services, West Africa Command was closed in July 1956. However, the forces of the four colonies retained limited links through the establishment of an Army Advisory Council for West Africa. The Council was headed by a British lieutenant-general with a staff of four officers. It was maintained by financial contributions from the four countries. Its job was to ensure uniformity in organisation, equipment and methods of training and to assist the governments in the coordination of defence. But as time went on, it became apparent that none of the territories was willing to commit its forces to a common pool. The Council was dissolved in 1958 following Nkrumah's decision to withdraw his country from the body. On the second anniversary of Independence in March 1959, Ghana also severed its connection with the RWAFF—which officially ceased to exist immediately prior to the attainment of Nigeria's Independence in 1960. The RWAFF Training School at Teshie continued to function to the end of 1959, by which time alternative arrangements for officer training had been made in the non-Ghanaian territories.³⁴

The net result of the Lagos Conference, therefore, was to pave the way for the creation of national armies in Commonwealth West Africa. Its aim was to initiate the process of institutional transfer in much the same way (although at a slower pace) as was occurring in the political sphere. However, the Conference did recognise that the colonies would not be militarily self-sufficient for some time to come. For this reason, recommendations and arrangements were made for the continued and increased provision of British military training and equipment. This ensured that the United Kingdom would continue to exercise considerable influence over the armed forces of her former dependencies without incurring the financial burden. The main manifestation of this relationship concerned the command structure of the army and the composition of the officer corps. When the Gold Coast became Ghana in 1957, the military establishment was headed by Major-

General A.G. Paley; he had been appointed in May 1954 and he was to stay in Ghana until January 1960. Under his command were 237 officers; of these, 208 were British and 29 were Ghanaians. There were also approximately 230 British WOs and NCOs—about the same number as were serving in Nigeria at that time. One question immediately suggests itself. Why had the localisation of the officer corps proceeded so sluggishly up to the date of Ghana's Independence? It is to this matter that the next section addresses itself.

Africanisation and the Officer Corps

The prospect of self-government for the Gold Coast, which began to appear on the horizon after World War II, again raised the question of the provision of African officers for the Gold Coast Regiment. Until 1939, the precedent for the recruitment of native officers was laid in India. There, it was directed, officers should be

confined to the small class of nobility or gentry . . . it would rest upon aristocracy of birth . . . and attach the higher ranks of Indian society, and more especially the old aristocratic families, to the British Government by closer and more cordial ties.³⁵

But in the Gold Coast such an indigenous class barely existed; and in any case men with urban backgrounds were not considered especially suitable as officer material in case they harboured radical nationalist opinions. In the second place, the military authorities placed great emphasis on maintaining universal standards (at this time the RWAFF was part of the British Army under the control of the British Army Council); they were not willing to lower entry qualifications in order to match the rate of localisation in the colonial civil service which, as Table 2.1 shows, was much more advanced.³⁶

The only senior figure who argued that localisation of the armed forces should roughly keep pace with that in the civil service was Lt.-General Sir Lashmer Whistler (Commander-in-Chief, West Africa Command, 1951–1953). He maintained that otherwise, if all the British officers and NCOs were removed, there would be chaos.³⁷ For most British army officers, however, it was inconceivable to lower “standards” and “efficiency” for the sake of local career aspirations.

In addition, unlike in India where the Congress Party had put pressure on the British since the early 1920s to increase the number of Indians in the army, the nationalist politicians in the Gold Coast appeared to take little interest in the racial composition of the officer corps until *after* Independence. However, the initiative for indigenisation eventually emanated from the British military authorities, elements of which had been greatly impressed by the soldierly qualities displayed by Africans in East Africa and Burma. They recognised that some experienced soldiers met the minimal standards for junior officer posts.

TABLE 2.1
COMPARATIVE RATES OF AFRICANISATION IN THE ARMY OFFICER
CORPS AND SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE, 1947-1957

Year (as of 1 April)	Army		Civil Service	
	Africans	Expatriates	Africans	Expatriates
1947	1	156	103	1,113
1948	2	151	146	1,072
1949	3	198	171	1,068
1950	5	218	268	1,043
1951	6	236	351	1,200
1952	8	238	520	1,322
1953	8	234	743	1,329
1954	11	227	936	1,395
1955	16	224	1,166	1,319
1956	25	213	1,364	1,227
1957	29	209	1,581	1,135

Sources: Statement on the Programme of the Africanisation of the Public Service (Accra: Government Printer, 1954); Statistics of Africanisation 1952-1959 (Accra: Establishment Secretary's Office, 1959); The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); and interviews with Ministry of Defence officials.

Attention has already been focused on the provision of emergency commissions in World War II whereby Seth Antony became an officer in 1941. After the war, a number of senior Africans were also granted temporary short-service commissions as an interim measure until the question of permanent commissions was resolved. As a result of a British cabinet decision in 1947, it was announced (in November 1948) that permanent commissioned status would be granted to holders of emergency officerships whose service had proved satisfactory.

Eight African NCOs who had seen service in the ranks during 1939-1945 were commissioned between 1947 and 1951. Joseph Ankrah, who had been a sergeant in Army Records, was commissioned in March 1947. He rose to become deputy Chief of Defence Staff in the early 1960s, but he was dismissed by President Nkrumah in July 1965; however, in 1966 he made a come-back as CDS and Chairman of the army-police NLC junta. Joe Michel, who had enlisted in the Pay Service at the age of nineteen in January 1945, was commissioned seven weeks after Ankrah. Described by Major-General H.T. Alexander, Paley's successor, as "head and shoulders above all the other Ghanaian officers,"³⁸ Michel subsequently commanded

the Second Battalion. He died in an air accident at Kintampo in September 1961. Next to be commissioned, on 1 May 1948, was Stephen Otu. He had enlisted on the same day as Michel in 1945. An army school-teacher, Otu replaced Alexander as CDS in 1961. He, too, was removed from his command in mid-1965.

There were no African commissions in 1949, but in 1950 Nathaniel Aferi, who had joined the Gold Coast Regiment as a recruit in May 1945 and who was subsequently dismissed from his post as CDS following the 1966 coup, and David Hansen (enlisted December 1944), who was seriously injured when his Third Battalion mutinied at Tshiakiapa in the Congo, but survived to head the Ghana Navy, received the King's Commission. The following year, Benjamin Awhaitey, Charles Bruce and Anthony Crabbe entered the officer corps. Awhaitey was court-martialed and cashiered from the army eight years later for failing to report conspiratorial conversations he allegedly had with United Party (UP) politicians.³⁹ Bruce and Crabbe were sent into diplomatic exile in 1967 as a punishment for failing to rally support for the NLC regime during the junior ranks' abortive counter-coup. With the sole exception of Michel, who was killed, all these officers became deeply embroiled in the political intrigue and machinations that constituted one facet of the Nkrumah years examined here. The nature of these conflicts, and the circumstances in which they occurred, form one part of the present study.

Momentum in the indigenisation process was accelerated following the West African Forces Conference at Lagos, when it was decided to admit Africans on a regular basis to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) and to the other British officer cadet schools at Mons and Eaton Hall. But this policy presented new difficulties. Due to the limited education facilities in the West African colonies, there were few local inhabitants with the requisite qualifications for enrolment as cadets. And, as will be seen, those who possessed the appropriate qualifications preferred to employ their talents in other fields. Thus, although it was agreed that Sandhurst should reserve twenty places each year for West African cadets, only a small proportion of the places was filled.

The rigorous selection procedures for Sandhurst entry explain why only three Gold Coasters—Barwah, Okai and Addo—graduated from the Academy before Independence. For this reason, the Gold Coast Military Forces continued to rely mainly on WOs and NCOs for African officer material. These men were commissioned if they passed the sixteen week Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) course at Eaton Hall, Chester. But rigid selection criteria applied here as well as for Sandhurst aspirants.

All applicants for a commission had first to satisfy a board of examiners as to his character and standard of education. Before a candidate presented himself, he had to possess minimum qualifications of four "O" levels, including English, in the General Certificate of Education or the Cambridge Overseas Certificate. A large proportion of the individuals commissioned before Independence obtained these passes as WOs and NCOs in the Army

Education Service. Thus, six of the eight officers commissioned between 1947 and 1951 came from this branch of the army. The next hurdle, the final selection board, would be followed by the six month recruit course at Teshie. If this course was successfully completed, candidates for short-service commissions were sent to Eaton Hall. These were converted to regular commissions after three years service as an officer or following the eighteen month (later two year) course at Sandhurst.

The testing nature of the selection procedures demanded by the professional British officers was one reason why so few Africans held commissions by March 1957. Yet in itself, this does not shed light on why such a small number of boys were tempted to go for a commission direct from secondary school. At the time of Independence, only two of the twenty-nine Ghanaian officers had received officer training immediately after enlistment; the remainder had all come up through the rank-and-file. In the next section, it will be argued that the failure of the military authorities to attract many secondary school graduates in the decade leading to Independence was largely tied up with the internal reputation of the colonial army and the alternative career opportunities open to educated young Africans. As we shall see, these aspects of our enquiry are, in their turn, closely related to the early pattern of recruitment into the West African colonial forces, particularly the British preference for recruiting troops from the "warrior races."

Military Recruitment and Reputation

In the nineteenth century, and for most of the period up to Independence, the constituent battalions of the RWAFF recruited troops from the more warlike tribes of the hinterland. In recruiting their forces, the British were guided by two overriding factors: their traditional respect for "martial races," based on the India experience, and their predilection for tribesmen from remote areas who would provide loyal service in local campaigns and internal security operations. The colonial military forces were established and organised for the subjugation and pacification of the native population in order to facilitate British commerce and administration. In the coastal areas, the flag slowly followed trade; but in the interior regions, military conquest preceded commerce. The basic policy of administrators such as Lugard in the remote districts was militaristic—"Thrash them first, conciliate them afterwards."⁴⁰ Reliable armed forces were essential ingredients in the growth of British imperialism.

From earlier colonial experience in India and elsewhere, the British noted that different tribes and ethnic groups varied a good deal, not only in appearance but also with regard to character. Some peoples were deemed to be inherently unfit for soldiering, while others were categorised as born fighters. The concept of the "warrior type" or "martial races," of whom ready loyalty and absolute obedience to command could be expected, was entrenched.

In this respect, military opinion regarding West Africans was similar to that prevailing in India where Lugard (later the RWAFF's first commandant) and many other officers received their early training. There was the same tendency to divide Africans into "warrior" and "non-warrior" races and to enlist peoples of supposedly unique fighting qualities uncontaminated, like the soldiers of Sparta, by the impact of materialism and education. As in India—where groups such as the Rajpoots (a soldier caste claiming descent from Kshatriyas) and the Punjabi Muslims were admired for their soldierly qualities—the north of what later became Ghana was regarded as "martial," the south as "non-martial." The ideal soldiery were generally supposed to be illiterates from remote areas; and British commanders were in no great hurry to "spoil" their military values and simple loyalty by too much education.⁴¹

During the early years of the RWAFF, some units used Hausa as the main medium of communication. As far as Nigeria was concerned, this was one indicator of the British preference for northerners. With regard to Ghana, the main training centres for the Gold Coast Regiment were historically located at Kumasi and Tamale. This reflected the bias in favour of recruiting men from the "martial races" of the Northern Territories, mainly Mamprussis and Fra-Fras (the word Fra-Fra means "wild man") from the extreme north, Mossis and Gonjas from the central zone and Dagombas from the vicinities of Tamale and Yendi.⁴² Before the colonial era, these tribes were frequently in a state of chronic warfare with each other. Such groups fitted the colonial stereotype of warriors, being regarded by the British as "tough," "reliable" and "cooperative." The Fra-Fra were a particularly war-like and turbulent tribe, "giving us a lot of trouble when we first took over the Northern Territories in 1897. For a long time there was a considerable amount of difficulty in curbing their fighting instincts."⁴³

Finally, it should be recorded that a small proportion of troops hailed from the French territories now known as Burkina Faso, Togo, Ivory Coast and Niger. The practice of employing foreigners for military service continued for several years after Ghana's Independence. From 1961, however, an army regulation prohibited the recruitment of aliens into the armed forces.⁴⁴

No precise statistical data on the ethnic composition of the ranks is available, but estimates made by senior army officers and ex-servicemen coincide with information to be gleaned from an examination of long service lists appearing in the *Ghana Gazette* and lists of honours and decorations awarded to native troops.⁴⁵ These sources indicate that of those who enlisted in the Regiment at the end of World War II, approximately 65 percent came from the Northern Territories. Very frequently, the communal affiliations of the men are quite obvious since the registered surname often coincides with ethnic group or area of origin. Thus, two arbitrarily selected copies of the *Ghana Gazette* (8 September 1961 and 1 June 1962) list over forty names, many of which are immediately recognisable in ethnic/regional terms: Bukari Sissala, Issa Moshi, Allasan Gonja, Braima Dagarti, Tindana Talense and so on.

However, the proportion of northern soldiers in the Gold Coast Regiment was undoubtedly higher in the decades before 1939, since the number of southerners was inflated by the RWAFF's expansion in the 1939–1945 war when the army was forced increasingly to turn to more educated recruits to train as drivers, mechanics, clerks and craftsmen. Between 1901 and 1939, the percentage of northerners in the rank-and-file ranged from eighty to ninety; northern names like Frafra, Mamprusi, Grumah, Grunshi, Beriberi and Bazabarimi (as well as those names noted above) overwhelmingly dominate every record scanned by the present writer. Southern names such as Laryea, Quashie and Sampong are rare.

Due to the uneven development of education in the Gold Coast, most of the recruits for technical training during World War II and after came from Kumasi and the coastal towns where primary school education was widespread. The opportunity for learning a trade that would later prove to be useful in civilian life must have been a major inducement to enlist. Many Africans became carpenters, electricians, bricklayers, tailors, cooks and truck drivers.⁴⁶ The change in policy came from the General Officer Commanding (GOC) West Africa, George Giffard, who made it clear that, as a result of the shortages of Europeans in West Africa, "every job that could be done by an African must be done by an African."⁴⁷ In Giffard's words,

This policy led of course to the enlistment of a class of men who had never joined the RWAFF in the days of peace. The principal source of enlistment for the infantry and the light artillery had been the natives of the tribes in the north of Nigeria and the Gold Coast and the hinterlands of Sierra Leone. These men had no education. The new forces needed men with education, and the bulk of the educated tribes lay in the south. . . . The first task then was to start a recruiting campaign to obtain the men both from the northern districts for the unskilled work and from the southern districts for the skilled and technical work.⁴⁸

In contrast to the new batch of southerners who had some formal education, the vast majority of northern troops were uneducated. According to one Kwahu (Akan) officer who came up through the ranks, northern soldiers were commonly referred to as "NTs" ("Not Intelligents" was substituted for "Northern Territories")—a designation resented by the mainly Muslim northerners who considered their educated compatriots to be showy and pompous.⁴⁹ This source of cleavage has been noted by Kotoka's biographer who records that most of the senior NCOs were illiterates who delighted in putting literates in their place. Educated soldiers "had to be careful not to offend the veterans, since there was a good deal of prejudice against those who could read and write."⁵⁰

The preference for enlisting northern infantrymen was not only influenced by their supposed martial qualities; it was also related to the imperatives of internal security. The primary role of the Regiment during peacetime was to suppress internal dissent and to assist the police in maintaining law

and order. On security grounds, it was sound policy for the colonial regime to recruit military personnel from those peoples and areas least likely to be involved in nationalist demonstrations, labour disputes and other forms of internal disorder. Amongst others, Lugard saw the utility in law and order operations of employing battalions "composed of races which have no affinities with the population of the region in which they are serving."⁵¹

There were good political reasons, therefore, for the selective recruitment of Other Ranks from politically quiescent and less nationalistic groups. Northern infantrymen, enlisted for their supposed martial qualities and physical toughness as well as for their putative political innocence, had little in common with their relatively sophisticated (mainly Christian) neighbours in the southern and coastal areas; they were quite capable of impartial, even hostile, action when the need arose. It is probably no exaggeration to say that they had as few qualms about suppressing rioting "strangers" in Kumasi or Koforidua than they had about fighting fellow Africans in the employ of Italians or Germans during the two world wars. It will now be seen how the pattern of recruitment into the ranks of the Gold Coast Regiment had larger consequences in the shape of the army's poor domestic image. This made it difficult, subsequently, for the military to widen its social base, which in turn had ramifications for the pace of officer Africanisation.

In his study of military and police forces in tropical Africa, Lefever states that an army officer in the 1950s was highly respected on the continent.⁵² This assessment is altogether misleading. Miners has clearly shown that the Nigerian Army at the time of, and before, Independence was regarded "as a thing apart, an alien institution to be ignored and despised."⁵³ Cox reported a similar situation in Sierra Leone: "There was a time in this country when a man would ask his children who was passing in his compound. The children would reply that it is not a person, it is a soldier."⁵⁴

Popular images of the army in Ghana suffered from parallel perceptions. Most African infantrymen were recruited from the lowest strata of society in the economically and educationally backward communities of the North. They were unsophisticated illiterates who came to be regarded as mercenary instruments of British domination, unfit for normal social intercourse with civilians. RWAFF units and their lineal successors were associated with the Ashanti wars and internal security operations against nationalists. For many civilians, the first view of the army was of "foreign" uniformed men armed with rifles and bayonets. On top of this, the soldiers' off-duty behaviour did little to commend them to the civilian population who frequently regarded them with fear and disdain. There were also occasions of civilians being assaulted and of women being molested by infantry troops in the battalion garrison towns; and a standardised image of the illiterate, bullying and licentious soldier was widely established.⁵⁵ One young officer, who subsequently headed the army's public relations office, explained that

Such unhealthy impressions of the Armed Forces in this country was pronounced at a time when, for one reason or the other, the military institution

was looked upon as a haven for criminals and illiterates. In fact, the behaviour of some *abongofo* [soldiers] who had returned from Burma after the last war strongly accentuated . . . such feelings.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the disapprobation and low level of esteem attached to the army by civilian citizens was projected on to the first generation of native officers—nearly all of whom had been commissioned from the ranks in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The social prestige of these men was also devalued by their low level of educational attainment—a factor of some importance in the education-related status system operating in Ghana. Nor did the supposed anti-intellectualism of the army (a universal civilian stereotype of military institutions) help to enhance the prestige of the officer corps amongst contemporary elites.

It is more than probable that such negative sentiments were to some extent internalised by the officers, and that the self-image of the army organisation and the relationship which its members believed to exist between it and society was also affected.⁵⁷ As is emphasised in Chapter 7, the likely outcome in such situations is the manifestation of extreme status sensitivity on the part of the armed forces. The exhibition of such preoccupations in Ghana, which reached its climax in the rebellion of 1966 and the search for individual self-enhancement and collective military honour in the aftermath of the coup, provides one of the binding explanatory threads in this analysis of civil-military relations during Ghana's first decade after Independence.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the army found it difficult, initially, to attract secondary school leavers who preferred to enter the established professions and the more prestigious civil service where localisation was proceeding quite rapidly. Relative to other jobs, the military's attraction as a career may be gauged with some accuracy by an examination of secondary school students' rankings of twenty-five occupations in order of their perceived prestige.

A study conducted by Foster in the early 1960s revealed that an army officer was ranked below doctor, university lecturer, lawyer, chief auditor, secondary school teacher, clergyman, businessman, nurse, political party worker and government clerk, although the job scored higher than actor, policeman (hardly surprising given the extremely low opinion most Ghanaians have of the police), farmer, car mechanic, middle school teacher and street cleaner.⁵⁸ In short, a career in the army came very low in a schoolboy's hierarchy of career aspirations, officers at that time being regarded as "small boys" in common parlance.

The validity of Foster's survey was corroborated by author interviews with a high proportion of officers who enlisted between 1950 and 1961, and by the few books that have been written by, or about, Ghanaian officers. One senior official, commissioned into the Infantry in March 1960, disclosed that the army's reputation was so "unflattering" that "we were forced to send recruiting teams touring all over the country to get enough people. My own family and school even conspired against me to try and make me

late for my interview in Accra.”⁵⁹ When Ocran, later an NLC member, was recruited into the Gold Coast Regiment as a private in 1947 (having seen an advertisement in the daily papers calling for candidates to join the Army Education Service), he tried to conceal the news from his relatives. On discovering the truth, there was considerable anxiety amongst the members of this household. His grandmother tried to prevail upon the military authorities to release him, but without success.⁶⁰

A similar story is told by Ofosu-Appiah, Kotoka’s biographer. Kotoka, one of the leading figures in the coup against Nkrumah (and a member of the NLC until his assassination by a junior subaltern in April 1967), also left home, secretly to enlist in 1947. His mother was “very disturbed” when the news leaked out, although his father apparently managed to take the ill-tidings “in his stride.”⁶¹ Afrifa, who also played a pivotal role in the 1966 coup, had less difficulty in joining up as his father had been a stone-mason attached to the Garrison Engineers at Tamale, while two of his uncles had served with the 82nd (West African) Division in the Far East. Nevertheless, Afrifa was perfectly aware of societal attitudes to the army:

I know that in Ghana people normally underrate the intelligence of the soldiers. This has a long tradition. The British Army did not at first attract the most able of our men. To our people, therefore, it seemed that only the failures in our society joined the army, that only the ones who did not go to school, or were not able to till the land, or were disobedient to their elders, put on the white man’s uniform.⁶²

Apart from the generally low opinion accorded the military establishment, there was another important factor that discouraged secondary school pupils from joining the army. This relates to the afore-cited British military authorities’ refusal to lower entry standards for admission to the officer ranks. For this reason, there were only eight African officers in April 1953, a proportionately far smaller figure than in the Gold Coast civil service where indigenisation was considerably more advanced. With reference again to Table 2.1, whereas Africans constituted approximately 12 percent of army officers at Independence, they occupied 60 percent of posts in the senior civil service (medical officers, judges, agricultural officers, engineers, accountants, customs officials, administrators etc.).

The rapid pace of localisation in the civil service offered secondary school graduates opportunities for accelerated promotion to senior levels within a few years. But in the army, where promotional rates were strictly maintained, a newly commissioned subaltern could not expect to reach major before eleven or twelve years: eighteen months to lieutenant, another three years to captain and six or seven years from captain to major. However, the different rates of Africanisation in the two organisations was also due to increases in the size of the civil service. In the decade 1947–1957, the number of posts in the senior civil service increased from 1,116 to 2,716.⁶³ Localisation resulted from the enlargement of the civil service rather than

from the replacement of whites by blacks. As Chapter 4 demonstrates, significant expansion of the armed forces did not occur until after 1958.

Such considerations were tied to the very important question of financial reward. Getting a boy through secondary school placed an immense burden on most families; they were naturally keen to realise dividends on their expenditure as quickly as possible. The fact that the military authorities failed to give details of pay and conditions of service in their advertisements for officer cadets, stressing instead the more intangible benefits of army life—service to country, opportunities for sport and travel, and officer *camaraderie*—which, as Hutchful notes, had “little relevance” to the aspirations of educated boys and their families,⁶⁴ also sheds light on the army’s failure to attract the best students. Indeed, at Independence there were no African university graduates in the Ghanaian Army.

Nonetheless, as has been noted elsewhere, conditions of service in the officer corps were far from modest.⁶⁵ Immediately before March 1957, a newly commissioned second-lieutenant received £600 a year as well as a number of additional advantages including subsidised quarters, free medical care for himself and his family, good sports facilities and various other amenities. But the monetary rewards and fringe benefits enjoyed by an army officer were inferior to those of an individual entering the administrative grade of the civil service. Moreover, faster promotion prospects in the expanding civil service meant quicker access to higher pay scales. This also took its toll on potential officer material.

Lastly, the salary differentials between British officers and NCOs and their African counterparts were significantly wider than the discrepancies pertaining elsewhere in the public service. Pay disparities between whites and blacks, together with the presence of separate messes and other facilities for British and African soldiers, led to charges of racial discrimination in the army.⁶⁶

Notes

1. N.M. Zaccai, *Civil-Military Relations in Developing Nations: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Dahomey and Upper Volta*, Edinburgh University, M.Sc. dissertation, 1973, p.1.

The prefix “Royal” was conferred on the WAFF by George V in 1928 when it became the Royal West African Frontier Force. For the sake of simplicity, the term RWAFF will be used throughout the text.

2. Unlike the British, the French did not develop territorial military establishments. The concept of developing “national” armies was non-existent; the only legitimate nation was France, with its overseas departments and territories.

3. A. Haywood and F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1964), p.7.

4. For a more thorough examination of the RWAFF’s origins and the responsibilities and military engagements of the constabularies, see Haywood and Clarke, *History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*; S.C. Ukpabi, *The West African Frontier Force*, Birmingham University, M.A. dissertation, 1964; and A. Lloyd, *The Drums of Kumasi: The Story of the Ashanti Wars* (London: Panther, 1965).

5. WO 32/6362: *Memorandum of Colonial Defence 1905-1906*. See, also, WO 32/4141/50B, 1936: *Secret Joint Memorandum by the War Office and Colonial Office on the System of Defence Organisation in the Colonial Dependencies of East and West Africa*.

6. Haywood and Clarke, *History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, p.37.

7. M. Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), p.267.

8. In the nineteenth century, Senegalese troops were used in the Napoleonic Wars, in the Crimean War, in the assault on Madagascar and against Mexico. African soldiers were also used in the Moroccan War of 1912 and against the Rif rising in 1912. V. Thompson and R. Adloff, *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p.68.

9. F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), p.574.

10. WO 32/4141: Patterson at WO to Dills CO, 28 May 1936.

11. WO 32/4141/50B, 1936: *Secret Joint Memorandum by the War Office and Colonial Office on the System of Defence Organisation in the Colonial Dependencies of East and West Africa*.

12. *Ibid.*

13. WO 32/4141/124A, 30 August 1939: *Secret cypher telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Officers Administering the Governments of Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and other African colonies*.

14. WO 32/4141/6295/38: Calder at CO to Hale WO secret, 23 December 1938. See, also, WO 32/4141/108A: Calder to Hale secret, 16 May 1939: *Cost of re-equipment of African military forces*.

15. WO 32/4141: DMO & I at WO to DUS CO, 19 January 1939. See, too, WO 32/4141: DUS at CO to DMO & I WO, 7 January 1939.

16. J.S. Coleman and B. Brice, "The Role of the Military in Sub-Saharan Africa," in J.J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.365.

17. The Ghana Army's Battle Honours are: Ashantee 1873-1874, Ashanti 1900, Kamina, Duala, Cameroons 1914-1916, Narungombe, East Africa 1916-1918, Wal Garis, El Wak, Juba, Bulu Erillo, Gelib, Alessandra, Wadara, Abyssinia 1940-1941, North Arakan, Kaladan, Tinma, Mayu Valley, Myohaung, Arakan Beaches, Taungup, Burma 1943-1945.

18. Field Marshal Sir W. Slim, *Defeat Into Victory* (London: Cassell, 1956), p.353.

19. Haywood and Clarke, *History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, p.372. Antony, who was awarded the M.B.E. as a captain in India, joined the colonial administration after the war (he was the third Ghanaian admitted to the administrative branch of the civil service, after A.L. Adu and Dr K.A. Busia), eventually becoming Ghana's High Commissioner in London under the NLC regime. Although Antony was the only commissioned officer from the Gold Coast during the war, a number of Gold Coast African NCOs became platoon commanders.

20. *Report on the Demobilisation and Resettlement of Gold Coast Africans in the Armed Services* (Accra: Government Printer, 1945), p.6.

21. *Ibid.*

22. "The Impact of War on British West Africa;" *International Affairs* XXIX (1945), p.211. Quoted in V. Plave Bennett, *The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Ghana: 1945-62*, Boston University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1971, p.73.

23. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast* (London: HMSO, Col.No. 231, 1948), p.7.

24. The real-wage index for daily-rated government employees dropped from 100 in 1939 to 66 in November 1945. D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.68.

25. Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, pp.505-506.

26. *Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances*, p.23.

27. *Ibid.*

28. E. Schleh, "The Post-War Careers of Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6,2 (June 1968), p.210. For a discussion on the activities of ex-soldiers in the post-war nationalist politics of Nigeria, see G.O. Olusanya's article in the same issue, pp.221-232.

29. Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.68.

30. *Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances*, p.12.

31. Schleh, "Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda," p.210.

32. Soon after these disturbances it was decided to re-form the Third Battalion. There were numerous occasions in the years leading to Independence when troops were moved from Tamale to Kumasi and from Takoradi to mandated Togoland to contain the excesses of Ashanti and Ewe nationalism.

33. *Report on the West Africa Forces Conference, Lagos 20-24 April 1953* (London: Colonial Office, Command 6577, 1954).

34. Until 1953, the establishment was known as the Command Training School. The course was given the name Cadets Cadre Course, or CCC. Students then proceeded to Eaton Hall, Chester. In 1953, the scope of training at Teshie was widened and the School was re-named the Regular Officers Special Training School (ROSTS). It provided the prospective officer with six months initial training before he left for Eaton Hall in England. ROSTS became the Ghana Military Academy in April 1960.

35. Lord Curzon, "Memorandum on Commission for Indians." Quoted by H. Alavi, *International Socialist Journal* (March-April 1966), p.158.

36. In March 1957, 40 percent of police officers were Ghanaian. A comparative analysis of Africanisation rates in the military and the police is provided in Chapter 9.

In her illuminating study of events and processes during these transitional years, Valerie Plave Bennett has suggested several additional reasons for the tardiness of the British: a feeling that African officers would not measure up to their European counterparts; concern about the problems which could arise when Africans outranked British officers; and the possibility that expatriate officers did not want their spouses subjected to social intercourse with African wives. *Evolution of Civil-Military Relations*, p.98.

37. Sir John Smyth, *Bolo Whistler: The Life of General Sir Lashmer Whistler* (London: Frederick Muller, 1967), p.46.

38. H.T. Alexander, *African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), p.46.

39. The Awhaitey affair is given extensive treatment in Chapter 5.

40. L.H. Gann and P. Duignan, *The Rulers of British Africa: 1870-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p.147.

41. According to one writer, the policy "involved no more than the assumptions that an upbringing in the wild hinterland would have inculcated both physical toughness and political unconsciousness, and that a countryman was always likely to make a better soldier than the town dweller." W.F. Gutteridge, *The Military in African Politics* (London: Methuen, 1969), p.9.

42. In the words of one Ghanaian, there was yet another explanation for the preponderance of men from the North: "In these areas limited opportunities for wage employment, the scarcity of good farming land and the absence of a large-scale cash crop economy made the army popular. The most vigorous of the army's recruiting drives had therefore been conducted in the Northern Territories or in the gold mines of Ashanti and the Colony, where northerners worked as 'migrant' labour for low wages." E. Hutchful, *Military Rule and the Politics of Demilitarization in Ghana, 1966-69*, Toronto University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1973, p.46.

43. H.H. Princess Marie Louise, *Letters from the Gold Coast* (London: Methuen, 1926), p.66.

44. Interview, Major B.B. Lowria, 13 August 1975.

45. *Ghana Gazette, 1957-1962* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1957-1962). The lists of honours and decorations were scrutinised in the military museum at Kumasi.

46. R. Headrick, "African Soldiers in World War II," *Armed Forces and Society* 4, 3 (May 1978), p.505.

47. General Sir George Giffard, "The Royal West African Frontier Force and its Expansion for War," *The Army Quarterly* L, 2 (July 1945), p.194.

48. *Ibid*; p.195. To anticipate one finding of the next chapter, it was to the ranks of these literate southerners—who could be trained in the skills and technical works of modern warfare—that the British authorities looked when the first cautious steps were taken to localise the officer ranks.

49. Interview, Colonel E.A. Yeboah, 12 August 1975. "In those days," said the colonel, "a career in the army was for someone who did not have an education. It was not considered a very attractive career. It was only for school drop-outs."

50. L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1972), p.23.

51. Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p.577.

52. E.W. Lefever, *Spear and Scepter: Army, Politics and Police in Tropical Africa* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1970), p.39.

53. N.J. Miners, *The Nigerian Army 1956-60* (London: Methuen, 1971), p.32. Miners quotes an officer who recalls that the military was considered "a place for the illiterates and criminals whose duties were to kill and be generally brutal. The activities of some soldiers in the villages and markets during the last war only confirmed their opinions." (p.30).

54. T.S. Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p.70.

55. For all that has been said above, it should be emphasised that the widespread contempt for the army among educated southerners was generally absent in the traditional recruiting grounds of the North where soldiers enjoyed considerable prestige among the uneducated. In these areas, ex-service status could be useful for those seeking traditional office or posts as government agents. Schleh, "Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda," p.209.

56. Lieutenant A. Enninful, "The Change from Civil to Military," *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1,1 (February 1967), p.19.

57. This issue, particularly where it relates to the implications of social and technological change on the self-image of the military professional, has been explored by M.D. Feld, "The Military Self-Image in the Technological Environment," in M. Janowitz (ed.), *The New Military* (New York: Russell Sage, 1969), pp.159-188.

58. P. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), Table 32, p.269.

59. Interview, Colonel L.K. Kwaku, 5 August 1975.

60. A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), p.xvi. On the same page Ocran adds: "I should explain that in those days it was thought improper or wasteful for a young school leaver of Southern Ghanaian origin to join the Army."

61. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka*, p.19.

62. A.A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p.93.

63. *Statement on the Programme of Africanisation of the Public Service* (Accra: Government Printer, 1954); and *Statistics of Africanisation 1952-1959* (Accra: Establishment Secretary's Office, 1959).

64. *Military Rule and Demilitarization in Ghana*, p.53.

65. *Ibid.*

66. One observer, who claimed that "racialism was applied to the armed forces," remarked that "When I used to go bathing on Labadi beach in the 1950s the most prominent building was one labelled BORS—British Other Ranks. It was the army's segregated bathing hut." G. Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), p.381.

3

The Officer Corps at Independence: A Social and Organisational Profile

The important constituents in the composition of African armies are generally thought to include the ethnic proportions among all the ranks, the different levels of education as well as significant groupings distinct by reason of age, rank and experience or by training. Thereafter, as one observer has remarked, it is open to argument whether military behaviour is determined by the sociology of the military establishment or by the conditions of the society in which the armed forces are located.¹ In our view, however, an investigation of the army and its place in politics is best pursued by utilising both traditions in the analysis of civil-military relations. This chapter is devoted to an examination of the social composition and educational background of the Ghanaian officer corps in March 1957. The importance of such material is twofold: in the first place, because this circle of men produced the key army conspirators in the anti-Nkrumah coup and, in the second place, because the data provides a synchronic base with which to compare recruitment cohorts of the post-1957 period.

Ghana's first generation of black officers, those NCOs and WOs who obtained commissions in the decade leading up to Independence, were selected mainly from the technical branches of the army. With few exceptions, they were recruited from the coastal region of the country so that the initial picture presented is one of southern officers in command of northern troops.

But the officer corps itself was racially divided, in which white officers heavily outnumbered their black *confrères*. One reason for this, as previously noted, was the insistence on the part of British officers that standards should be maintained. Another consideration was the ready availability of Europeans for the officer posts of the army. Both these explanations, together with those factors discussed in Chapter 2, explain why the military hierarchy at Independence was heavily dominated by expatriates.

In this chapter, it will also be explained how the geographical deployment of educational facilities in Ghana affected the structure of native recruitment into the officer corps. Why did twenty-seven of the African officers come from the South and only two from the North? The pattern of southern

ethnic and regional group induction into the army will also be examined. How was this related to such factors as the recruitment policies of the colonial power, the variation in achievement motivation between the ethnic groups or the different opportunities for education and alternative careers? Later in this study, the line of enquiry will be extended to ask how, if at all, region and tribe could be a focus for primordial loyalties in the planning and execution of the coup against Nkrumah.

Finally, in order to gain clearer insights into the officers' background and their place in society, they will be compared with other societal groupings. It will be found that Ghana's elite was a recently created one and that its numbers were very small. And even though a career in uniform as yet conferred little of the social standing enjoyed by other professional bodies, in many respects, particularly on the grounds of employment, salary and lifestyle, the officers were comparable to other elite segments. However, their humbler origins and poorer educational qualifications separated them, to some extent, from the professional intelligentsia with whom they compared themselves.

Localisation: 1951–1957

At the moment of Independence, one of the most noticeable characteristics of the military was the overwhelming preponderance, both numerically and as gauged by seniority, of European officers over their black colleagues. On 6 March 1957, there were 209 Britons and twenty-nine Ghanaians in the army officer corps. The white officers were either contract personnel, who had retired from the British Army, or officers seconded from the metropolitan army to work in Ghana. Many of those in the former category were what are rather unkindly referred to as "passed over majors" who would otherwise have been made redundant as a consequence of reductions in the strength of Britain's post-war army. Many of them had considerable colonial experience in India and Africa. These men received the Ghanaian officer's rate of pay plus the normal government expatriation allowance.

Of the eighty-six seconded officers serving in Ghana, there was one major-general, four lieutenant-colonels, twenty-three majors, fifteen captains, seven lieutenants and thirty-six second-lieutenants. Regular officers accounted for forty-one of this total, short service officers for twenty-two and National Servicemen (all second-lieutenants) for the remaining twenty-three.² The rank distribution and number of British officers in the Gold Coast/Ghana for each year from 1951 to 1961 is tabulated in Table 3.1. The easy availability of experienced middle-ranking contract officers for the higher posts, and National Service subalterns for the junior ranks, provides yet one more explanation for the slow progress of Ghanaianisation. Had these sources of officer material not been so readily to hand, it can be conjectured that Africanisation would have been more vigorously pursued. Indeed, during the period of dyarchy between 1951–1957, when the British continued to retain ultimate control of the colonial military forces, the number of officers seconded from Britain actually increased, from sixty to eighty-six.³

TABLE 3.1
RANK DISTRIBUTION OF BRITISH ARMY OFFICERS IN
THE GOLD COAST/GHANA, DECEMBER 1951-SEPTEMBER 1961^a

Year ^b	Rank ^c								Total
	M-G	B	C	L-C	M	C	L	2-L	
1951	0	1	0	2	21	25	10	1	60
1952	0	1	0	3	24	17	9	11	65
1953	0	1	0	3	20	16	9	18	67
1954	0	1	0	4	17	10	6	29	67
1955	0	1	0	4	16	11	7	40	79
1956	1	0	0	4	18	15	10	19	67
1957	1	0	0	4	23	15	7	36	86
1958	1	1	2	9	50	47	19	33	162
1959	1	1	5	9	52	59	12	26	165
1960	1	1	0	9	54	66	21	34	186
1961	1	0	2	17	64	83	16	38	221

Sources: The Army Lists 1951-61 (London: HMSO, 1951-61); Report on the West African Forces Conference, Lagos, 20-24 April 1953 (London: Colonial Office, Command 6577, 1954); and interview with Major B.B. Lorwia, Burma Camp Records Office, 13 August 1975.

^a These are made up of officers with (i) regular commissions in the British Army, (ii) short service commissions in the British Army and (iii) British national service officers (except for 1951). Thus, in 1956, for example, the 67 officers comprised 31 regulars, 25 short service officers and 11 national service officers; while in September 1961, immediately prior to the expulsion of British officers by Nkrumah, the 221 British army officers were made up of 125 regulars, 82 short service officers and 14 national servicemen.

The figures do not include retired British army officers who were employed on contract terms and granted temporary commissions in the Gold Coast/Ghana (about 100 for the years 1951--1957). Hence the large jump in numbers after 1957 as a result of Ghana's Independence.

^b As at December, except for August in 1957 and September for 1958--1961.

^c M-G: Major-General; B: Brigadier; C: Colonel; L-C: Lt.-Colonel; M: Major; C: Captain; L: Lieutenant; 2-L: Second-Lieutenant.

As it was, since November 1951 when Crabbe was commissioned, there had been a net increase of only twenty-one black officers, from eight to twenty-nine. None of these men held independent commands. The rate of commissioning had increased from an average of two per annum in the 1947-1951 period to approximately four a year between 1951 and 1957, although six Africans had been commissioned in both 1955 and 1956. As indicated in Table 3.2, of the twenty-nine Ghanaians, three were majors, fifteen were captains, ten were lieutenants and one was a second-lieutenant. Almost all of them were commissioned as full lieutenants, while some, the first six to reach officer status, joined the officer fraternity as captains. The reason for such saltations was that Army Regulations allowed soldiers to count half their time in the ranks towards commissioned service. Ocran and Kotoka, for instance, were commissioned in 1954, but they were able to claim forty-two months seniority on their seven years in uniform since 1947.

Following the post-Lagos Conference decision to train Africans as officers on a regular basis, the army authorities were under pressure to select suitable candidates from the ranks. For a conglomeration of reasons already cited, this was due to the disappointingly low numbers of applicants from secondary schools. So it was that all the local officers, with the exceptions of Okai and Addo, were commissioned after several years in the rank-and-file. But the number of Other Ranks who were in a position to satisfy the high educational requirements was obviously limited despite the fact that the progressive replacement of British NCOs by Africans during the 1950s had created a pool of potential officer material from which the best could be chosen for officer training.⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that most officer cadets came from the technical branches of the Regiment—particularly the Army Education Service.

In fact, many soldiers who enlisted in the 1940s were influenced by the knowledge that a military career was about the only chance they had of upgrading their educational qualifications. As one officer has explained:

there are opportunities for furthering one's education in the Army. I would study all the same. I did not want to enter secondary school and to be told midway that there were no more funds to see me through . . . by 1952 I had qualified to enter a University if I wanted to.⁵

Kotoka, Ocran, S.J.A. Otu, Awhaitey, Tevie (all middle school leavers) and many others all joined the Education Service. Among the duties of an army teacher was to teach illiterate soldiers to read and write and to educate the children of military personnel. A prospective instructor had to pass the basic and final Instructors' courses before being appointed automatically to the rank of sergeant. Further promotion in the Education Service depended on seniority, general performance as an instructor and the passing of upgrading tests. Kotoka and Ocran climbed from Class II of the Instructors' ladder to Class I in sixteen months; in 1953, they passed

TABLE 3.2
THE GHANAIAN OFFICER CORPS, 6 MARCH 1957

Name	Date commissioned		Age on commission	Rank and Seniority	Training ^a	Ethnic origin
J.A. Ankrah	March	1947	31	Maj. Sept. 1954	EH	Ga
J.E. Michel	April	1947	30	Maj. Aug. 1954	EH	Ewe
S.J.A. Otu	May	1948	32	Maj. July 1954	EH	Akan (Akwapim)
N.A. Aferi	March	1950	30	Capt. Sept. 1953	EH	Akan (Akwapim)
D. Hansen	March	1950	30	Capt. Oct. 1953	EH	Ga
B. Awhaitey	Jan.	1951	32	Capt. Dec. 1953	EH	Ga
C.C. Bruce	April	1951	26	Capt. July 1952	EH	Ga
A.A. Crabbe	Nov.	1951	23	Capt. Dec. 1954	EH	Ga
C. Barwah	June	1953	26	Capt. July 1955	RMAS	North (Dagomba)
M.A. Otu	Aug.	1953	28	Capt. Sept. 1955	EH	Akan (Akwapim)
S.A. Lartey	Aug.	1953	29	Capt. Nov. 1955	EH	Akan (Larteh)
E.K. Kotoka	Nov.	1954	28	Capt. July 1956	EH	Ewe
A.K. Ocran	Nov.	1954	25	Capt. Oct. 1956	EH	Akan (Fanti)
G.H. Slater	Nov.	1954	25	Lt. June 1954	EH	Ga
G.K. Yarboi	Nov.	1954	28	Capt. July 1956	EH	Ga
M.B. Sanni-Thomas	Nov.	1954	27	Lt. May 1956	EH	Akan (Fanti)

P.F. Quaye	June	1955	30	Capt. May	1955	EH	Ewe
P. Laryea	June	1955	28	Capt. Oct.	1952	EH	Ga
J.M. Ewa	June	1955	25	Lt. Jan.	1956	EH	Nigerian
J.T. Addy	June	1955	29	Lt. Oct.	1954	EH	Ga
A.B. Asafu-Adjaye	June	1955	28	Capt. Nov.	1956	EH	Akan (Ashanti)
L.A. Okai	Dec.	1955	21	2/Lt. Dec.	1955	RMAS	Akan (Akwapim)
D.C.K. Amenu	Feb.	1956	27	Lt. July	1954	EH	Ewe
A.K. Kattah	Feb.	1956	23	Lt. July	1955	EH	Ewe
I.A. Ashitey	Feb.	1956	26	Lt. Oct.	1955	EH	Ga
G. Amoah	June	1956	26	Lt. Oct.	1955	EH	Akan (Fanti)
D.K. Addo	June	1956	24	Lt. Oct.	1954	RMAS	Ga
C.K. Tevie	Aug.	1956	28	Capt. Feb.	1957	EH	Ewe
D.G. Zanlerigu	Feb.	1957	24	Lt. Oct.	1955	EH	North (Fra-Fra)

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); The Army Lists 1947-57 (London: HMSO, 1947-57); The Wish Stream: Journal of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (1951-57); interviews with serving and retired members of the armed forces; and the writer's special biographical file on the officer corps.

^a Eaton Hall, Chester; or Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

the examination for entry into the Regular Officers Special Training School (ROSTS) at Teshie, near Accra.

The seven most senior African officers—Majors Ankrah, Otu and Michel, and Captains Aferi, Awhaitey, Hansen and Bruce—had all joined the Gold Coast Regiment during the 1939–1945 war.⁶ Several of them had considerable combat experience. One of these, Awhaitey, had been attached to the army for two years as a civilian schoolmaster until his enlistment in June 1941. He spent the 1943–1946 years on active service in Burma.

Most of the other officers had served in the ranks for six or seven years before selection for officer training. Amenu, for example, joined the army at the age of nineteen in 1948, reaching warrant officer status in 1951. In 1955, he was picked out for the cadet course at Teshie and commissioned in February 1956. Subsequently he rose to the rank of major-general, holding a variety of ministerial portfolios in the Acheampong regime after the 1972 coup. Both Kotoka and Ocran enlisted in 1947 and were commissioned in November 1954. Eleven years later, as infantry brigade commanders, they deployed their troops against Nkrumah's CPP, inaugurating Ghana's first military administration. The only regular officer to be killed in the 1966 coup, Charles Barwah signed up in March 1948. The son of an army sergeant, Barwah did in 1951 what no other soldier from the North had achieved: he passed the officers' training course examination. Only one other Northerner, Zanlerigu, a Fra-Fra from the extreme north of Ghana, reached officer rank before March 1957. He was commissioned as a lieutenant three weeks before Independence.

One result of this pattern of recruitment from the ranks into the officer corps was the relatively high age of black officers at the time of their commissioning. As may be seen in Table 3.2, seven officers were at least 30 years old and one, S.J.A. Otu, was 32. Grouped together, the twenty-nine officers had an arithmetic mean age of 27, a mode of 28 years and a median of 26 years and six months at the time of being commissioned. At Independence, their average age⁷ was a little under 31 (majors: 40, captains: 31, lieutenants: 27, second-lieutenants: 22).

These statistics are not documented gratuitously; they are presented because it is important to emphasise that the limited localisation of the officer corps by March 1957 had not created an over-youthful and inexperienced African officer cadre. Indeed, by British Army standards, there was nothing abnormal about the fit between these men's ages and the ranks they held. This is in sharp contrast to the dramatic departure from established norms that occurred *after* Independence, the consequences of which are catalogued in Chapter 6.

Schooling and Social Background

As illustrated in Table 3.2, all the Ghanaians had been sent abroad for training in England. However, only three—Barwah, Addo and Okai—had qualified for a place on the eighteen-month course at Sandhurst. Some

officers had undergone further overseas training at the shorter specialised courses for company commanders at the Small Arms School, Hythe, at the Warminster School of Infantry and at Catterick Camp in Yorkshire. Others had done four months service with the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) immediately after graduating from Eaton Hall. For instance, Ocran, Slater and Sanni-Thomas were attached to the First Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, and Kotoka served with the First Battalion, King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry. From the British viewpoint, these training schemes were offered in order to guarantee the continuance of high professional standards in an army that would eventually be staffed entirely by Africans.

The exceptions to this otherwise uniform pattern of recruitment were provided by Okai and Addo who were given officer cadetships straight from school. Commissioned eight months after his twenty-first birthday, Okai was the youngest black officer at Independence (Ankrah, who was born in 1915, was the oldest). He received his elementary education at his home town of Asafo Akim in the Eastern Region, later spending three years at the prestigious Achimota School—which, with its green lawns and old clock-tower, has all the appearances of a minor English public school. After nearly two years at the Kumasi College of Technology (later the University of Science and Technology), he joined the army in 1953 and left for Eaton Hall and Sandhurst the same year. Twenty-one years later, the young Akwapim officer was appointed CDS and joined the ranks of the military politicians on the National Redemption Council (NRC). Addo, who had received his secondary education at the Salem Secondary School, was commissioned nine months before Independence; he also reached the rank of major-general, in his case as Busia's army commander in the Second Republic. Subsequently, he was quietly eased out of his post as Commissioner for Agriculture in the NRC regime—for "health reasons"—when his dealings in state-subsidised fertilisers became an embarrassment to the military government.

Although educational statistics compiled here show that ten of the twenty-six African officers on whom information is available had attended secondary school, three of them had not successfully completed their secondary education. In one instance, this was due to financial support from family sources drying up; in the other cases, it was due to the fact that the students had failed to pass their examinations.⁸ Nevertheless, apart from Okai and Addo who had done exceptionally well academically, the handful of secondary school graduates were not directly admitted as officer cadets either because the indigenisation programme had not been set in motion (as was the case in 1939 when Ankrah enlisted) or because, even when the policy had been put into operation, the British authorities felt that a period of service in the ranks would provide the most appropriate initial training for potential African officers.

In the British view, this check was designed to ensure that local officers were professionally qualified and competent to carry out their duties and that commissions, promotions and postings rested on considerations of

suitability and merit. For them, to permit a deterioration in standards would have represented a gross abrogation of duty. Thus, it was not until December 1955 that an African (Okai) was commissioned without first having served in the ranks. Nonetheless, this further manifestation of caution over the question of localisation, together with the formidable list of hurdles previously documented, probably acted as an additional disincentive to secondary school graduates who might otherwise have considered a career in the armed services.

A small number of officers had received post-middle school education at teacher training colleges and had then become teachers before their enlistment. One of these was Michel. Another was S.J.A. Otu who had taught at Achimota School before the war. Of the remaining officers for whom data is available, all of them had only received middle school education. However, many of these had other professionally relevant experience in the form of pre-military civilian employment. For instance, Kotoka had been a teacher-catechist in Torve (even preaching in the local church when the priest was absent). He later became apprenticed to a goldsmith in Keta before enlisting in 1947.⁹ Ocran worked on a farm for two years after his family found it impossible to find the equivalent of one English shilling a month needed to continue his education.¹⁰ Ankrah had been a clerk in the Gold Coast Regiment's civilian administration; Bruce, Sani-Thomas and Slater had worked as municipal council clerks; Awhaitey and Ewa had been civilian teachers attached to the army, and a number of other middle school leavers, Laryea and Tevie for example, had also been teachers before joining the Regiment.¹¹

The family and educational background of the Ghanaian officer corps in 1957 tends to confirm Gutteridge's assessment that "An army officer at present is *more likely* (my emphasis) to be the son of a peasant cocoa farmer or post office official than of a professional man who will probably have educated his son for the bar or the Civil Service or a similar occupation of established prestige."¹²

Ocran's father was a poor rural cocoa trader, and Quaye, like the other five Ewes (Michel, Kotoka, Amenu, Kattah and Tevie), came from small farming and fishing communities in the economically backward Volta Region. The parents of most of the other officers were engaged in farming or were employed in the lower clerical and commercial sectors (in a number of cases the mother worked as a trader). But the fact that a significant proportion of officers (Crabbe, Addy, Ankrah, Bruce, Addo, Asafu-Adjaye and Okai) came from relatively wealthy and well-established Ghanaian families makes it misleading to arrive at tidy generalisations about the socioeconomic origins of these individuals. However, it can be seen that the first generation of black officers exhibited numerous similarities in background.

Ethnicity and Education: The Gap Between North and South

It has already been noted that the majority of Other Ranks continued to be recruited from the Northern Territories until, and for several years

TABLE 3.3
ETHNIC/REGIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE GHANAIAN
OFFICER CORPS, 6 MARCH 1957

Tribe	Number of officers	Officers as % of total	Tribe as % of total population (1960) ^a
Ga-Adangbe	11	37.95	9
Akan	9	31.05	47
Ewe	6	20.65	13
North ^b	2	6.90	31
Other ^c	1	3.45	-
Total	29	100.00	100

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); The Army Lists 1947-57 (London: HMSO, 1947-57); 1960 Population Census of Ghana (Accra: Census Office, 1964); interviews with serving and retired members of the armed forces; and the writer's special biographical file on the officer corps.

^a To nearest 1 percent.

^b Made up of the Gur-speaking peoples: Mole-Dagbani, Grusi, Gurma and Senufo.

^c Naturalised Ghanaian of Nigerian origin (Lt. J.M. Ewa).

after, Independence. This must be contrasted with the overwhelming predominance of southerners within the officer corps by March 1957. As may be seen in Table 3.3, Ghana's three southern ethnic groups, the Akan, the Ga-Adangbe and the Ewe, provided over 90 percent of the African officers.¹³ It is immediately obvious from the data that the number of officers from any one of the four ethnic groupings bore no relation to the size of each group in the country as a whole. Thus, although Akans constituted almost half the population (1960 census),¹⁴ only nine of the officers, or approximately 31 percent, were Akan.

On the other hand, while the Ewe formed only 13 percent of the population, six officers, or more than 20 percent of the total, were from this tribe. Even more startling are the figures for the Ga-Adangbe and the North. Eleven of the officers, roughly 38 percent, were Ga-Adangbe, whereas only two of them—Barwah (Dagomba) and Zanlerigu (Fra-Fra)—or less than 7 percent, were from the North. When it is remembered that the Gur-speaking peoples of northern Ghana made up more than three tenths of

the population, while the Ga-Adangbe constituted less than one tenth, the anomaly takes on a significance of some import.¹⁵ Fortunately, we are in a position to explain these differential recruitment patterns into the officer corps due, firstly, to the availability of a pioneering study on education and social change in the early 1960s,¹⁶ and, secondly, by analysis of data compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Census Office and the Education Department.

Just as education was not distributed evenly among the children of various socioeconomic categories,¹⁷ so too certain ethnic groups had a disproportionate number of educated persons. In the Introductory Preview, reference was made to the fact that the educational and economic benefits of the colonial era were unevenly distributed, to the advantage of the coastal and southern regions and to the disadvantage of the hinterland. The first people to profit from education were the Fanti and the Ga-Adangbe whose contact with European traders dates from the early sixteenth century. Communication with the Ewe, in what was later to become known as the Trans-Volta-Togoland region, was established later; while direct intercourse with the Ashanti only became frequent after Wolseley's punitive expedition against Kumasi in 1874. The extension of British control over the Northern Territories was not established until the beginning of the twentieth century, but even then the missionary schools that accompanied (and sometimes preceded) colonial expansion were rejected by the conservative Muslim chiefdoms.

By 1950, 281,020 pupils from a total population of almost four and a quarter million (or 6.6 percent of the population) were enrolled in the colony's 2,999 primary and secondary schools. However, the proportion of the population attending school showed an incremental decline as one moved from south to north. So it was that in the southern portion of Trans-Volta, 9.6 percent of the local population of 273,000 were enrolled in school; whereas in the Northern Territories, where there were only eighty-three schools for a population of well over one million, only 0.5 percent of the population (or 5,059 individuals) were benefitting from a school education. The territories inhabited by the constituent elements of the Akan occupied an intermediate position which, with 8.1 percent of its total population attending school,¹⁸ was nevertheless well over the national average. While it is true that the rate of school provision was higher in the North than elsewhere after 1950, its starting base was so small, particularly in the case of post-middle school and secondary education, as to render this factor relatively meaningless. Thus, of Ghana's total of 124 secondary schools and forty-five teacher training colleges with a combined student enrolment of 38,737 in 1964, the Northern Territories had seven secondary schools, six teacher training colleges and only 2,468 students.¹⁹

In the light of these statistics, it is hardly surprising that a negligible number of officers came from the North. Concomitantly, these figures explain the overwhelming preponderance of officers from the southern ethnic groupings where educational facilities—and thus access to employment in

the modern sector of the economy and the public services—were relatively widespread.

The analysis in this section has focused on the skewed pattern of recruitment evident in what was—with the exceptions of Barwah and Zanlerigu—a group composed entirely of southerners. Between 1918–1939, an overwhelming majority of soldiers were recruited in the North. After World War II ended, most infantrymen still came from the Northern Territories but skilled tradesmen and clerks, who had been enlisted by Giffard for war service (Chapter 2), continued to come from the South. It was from this grouping of literate southerners that the Gold Coast Regiment first looked for indigenous officer material. So it was that the cleavage between skilled tradesmen and technicians from the southern and coastal regions and infantry troops from the North came to be reproduced in the scission between officers and ranks. By far the most important variable leading to this state of affairs was the differential impact of education and modernisation during the colonial era. Yet for all the above, our data fails to account for the marked disparities in recruitment patterns between the three southern groupings.

Differential Recruitment Patterns in the South

It has already been noted that the south of Ghana was responsible for providing nine tenths of the army's black officers. Two other striking features of the native officer corps were the large proportion of Gas and Ewes, who accounted for seventeen out of twenty-nine or almost 60 percent of the total, and the relatively poor representation of Akans, particularly Ashantis. How are these features in the physiognomy of the officer corps to be explained?

Several officer interviewees who were commissioned prior to Independence suggested that one of the main reasons for the numerical underrepresentation of Akans in the officer corps was related to the alternative career opportunities available to educated youth in the agriculturally and mineral rich areas inhabited by the Akan. According to these sources, another pertinent factor was the almost total failure of the army to recruit Ashantis—who constitute almost 40 percent of the Akan—into its units. Indeed, only one Ashanti, Captain A.B. Asafu-Adjaye, reached officer status before 1957.²⁰ One explanation for this is directly linked to the local image of the armed forces which, in view of prolonged Ashanti resistance to British imperial incursions, had a particularly poor reputation in Kumasi and its environs. Thirdly, for many years Ashantis were purposely excluded from entering the ranks of the Gold Coast Regiment. It is true that after the 1900 Ashanti War there were suggestions for enlisting large numbers of Ashantis in the Regiment because of their bravery against the British. In the end, the arguments against employing them prevailed "as it was thought they would not be amenable to discipline when away from their own chiefs."²¹ In any case, and for reasons previously cited, urban Africans (and many Ashantis lived in Kumasi) were unwelcome to British military recruiting teams.²²

The possibility of upward mobility has always made the military attractive to individuals from minority communities and low-status groups in Africa and elsewhere. For ambitious men from lowly origins, not only does a military career offer opportunities for education, but also it affords the chance of success in a job less likely to be concerned with social background than is the case in some other professions.²³ And the six Ewes who represented more than a fifth of the black officer corps in March 1957—and whose similarities in background, education and military training were to be crucial determinants in the composition of the conspirators and planning of the coup in 1966—had the humblest social origins of all the three southern groups.

Without exception, they hailed from indigent farming and fishing families in the Trans-Volta. Not one of them had attended secondary school; in their case, therefore, the likelihood of entering on the one hand the administrative ranks of the civil service or on the other the established professions was bleak. Furthermore, it was a widely held Ewe belief that access to higher posts in the civil service and the professions would be reserved increasingly for Akans and Gas who already dominated these fields of employment. This perception may be contrasted to the general assumption that the army (especially one whose command structure continued to be dominated by British officers) would not be manipulated by those in positions of power to distribute patronage and favouritism to secure advantage for their own, to the detriment of less dominant ethnic groups. In other words, it seems likely that Ewes felt that selection for officer training and promotion would be based on criteria of achievement rather than ascription. These considerations, together with the paucity of natural resources and good farming land in the area later to be styled the Volta Region, explain why a career in the military was considered an attractive proposition by young Ewes from peasant families.²⁴

While the Ewe officers possessed the lowest educational qualifications, the Ga officers, of whom almost 55 percent were secondary school graduates, commanded the highest level of formal scholastic attainment. In point of fact, the virtual monopoly of secondary education qualifications held by Ga officers was so comprehensive that only one non-Ga officer, Second-Lieutenant L.A. Okai, an Akwapim, had similar educational status. If a conscious effort had been made to balance the ethnic/regional representation of officer recruits (as occurred in Nigeria from 1958 onwards), the Gas would have been entitled to three officers at most. As it was, of the first eight soldiers to be commissioned during the initial phase of Africanisation between 1947–1951, five—Ankrah, Hansen, Awhaitey, Bruce and Crabbe—were Gas (see Table 3.4).

The dominance of Ga officers at Independence reflected not only their superior education but also the desire of the British military authorities to commission educated Africans in their own image. Many of the Ga officers came from established and well-known Accra families that had worked in close cooperation with the colonial regime for several generations. Up until

TABLE 3.4
ETHNIC/REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION^a OF GHANAIAN OFFICERS
COMMISSIONED UP TO INDEPENDENCE

Year of commission	Ga	Akan	Ewe	North	Other	Total
1947	1	-	1	-	-	2
1948	-	1	-	-	-	1
1949	-	-	-	-	-	0
1950	1	1	-	-	-	2
1951	3	-	-	-	-	3
1952	-	-	-	-	-	0
1953	-	2	-	1	-	3
1954	2	2	1	-	-	5
1955	2	2	1	-	1 ^b	6
1956	2	1	3	-	-	6
1957	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total	11	9	6	2	1	29

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); The Army Lists 1947-57 (London: HMSO, 1947-57); interviews with serving and retired members of the armed forces; and the writer's special biographical file on the officer corps.

^a The table excludes T/Major S.K. Antony who was awarded an emergency commission in 1941.

^b Naturalised Ghanaian of Nigerian origin (Lt. J.M. Ewa).

1951, such families tended to see themselves as the natural heirs to British rule. Perhaps, too, they had fewer qualms about letting their sons enter the armed forces. These people did not subscribe to the Ashanti view of the military establishment as an organ of colonial subjugation. Indeed, during the nineteenth century the British tended to make common cause with the small coastal states against the Ashanti. But in Ashanti eyes the communities of these states were her subjects through conquest.²⁵

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it has been shown that numerous similarities in family background and educational attainment were to be found among the black officers. Three quarters of them came from small communities in the economically backward regions and/or were the sons of poor traders, fishermen, peasant farmers, lower paid clerical employees and suchlike. But the relatively uniform pattern of recruitment was inter-

rupted by a group of (mainly Ga) officers who came from less humble origins, mostly in the vicinity of Accra. As will be demonstrated later in this study, the loyalty of these soldiers, who tended to identify with the opposition politicians of the United Party, especially the Ga Shifimo Kpee,²⁶ was suspect. It was from within this group, in the figure of one Captain Benjamin Awhaitey, that the first military plot against Nkrumah was hatched.

However, of even greater significance for the purposes of this investigation were the marked parallelisms exhibited by the six Ewes with regard to age, upbringing, formal education and military training and experience. For it was from within this ethnically homogenous circle that the bulk of key army conspirators in the rebellion of 1966 was drawn. And to anticipate the material highlighted in Chapter 8, the primordial affinities and peer group attachments of the central army (and police) collaborators were to be crucial determinants in the politics of the February *coup d'état*.

The Officer Corps as an Elite

Although the officers commissioned between 1947–1957 were not recruited from one easily definable or homogenous segment of the population, they should be regarded, for all intents and purposes, as constituting part of the country's elite. By reason of their poorer average formal education and their lower social standing, they differed as a group from de Graft Johnson's upper middle class or intelligentsia. But even on the grounds of education and employment, there can be no doubting the privileged position occupied by the indigenous military officers.

Whilst one should stress that the size of the Western-educated elite had expanded rapidly after 1945, the fact remains that, even by the late 1950s and early 1960s, its numbers were still very small. Thus, in 1960, the professional, technical, administrative, executive, managerial and related workforce (which included the officers of the armed forces) accounted for only 3.9 percent of employed males aged fifteen and over. And even if clerical workers are included, the figure still remains as low as 6.5 percent of the total male occupied population.²⁷

Considered from an alternative but associated perspective, the elite status of the officers during the period under review is also demonstrated by the 1960 census which provides the educational statistics for the Ghanaian population: 280,000 men (from a total population of 6,700,000) had completed middle school, 25,000 had a secondary school education and 16,500 had taken courses in commercial, technical or teacher training. It is against these figures that the educational background of the army officers should be measured. All of them had completed middle school; and approximately half had attended secondary or teacher training schools. Lastly, with a starting salary of £600 for a newly commissioned second-lieutenant (and the majority of first generation officers, it should be remembered, were commissioned with two or even three pips), the African officers occupied an income bracket which placed them well within the 8,000 or so top-

earning men and women in Ghana.²⁸ In short, these uniformed bureaucrats belonged to a recently created elite which exhibited a relatively "open" structure in its pattern of recruitment from lower strata.²⁹ And to a large extent, membership of this elite rested upon qualifications and skills acquired through the process of formal education.

In the Introductory Preview, some reference was made to the bureaucratic and political character of the new African elites. At Independence, the large majority of educated Ghanaians, whose opinions would be expected to have some influence on government policies, were themselves employees of the government.³⁰ This group, consisting of professionals such as lawyers, doctors, secondary school and university teachers, middle and top grades of the civil service, managers and army officers among others, was a typical outcome of the social and economic changes that took place during the colonial era when the British authorities were obliged to train young Africans for the colonial administrative and commercial system.

During the period of European rule, dual salary scales and conditions of service operated in the Gold coast—one for Africans and one, based on salaries in the metropolitan country, for expatriate officials. With the prospect of Independence and the acceleration of the localisation programme, it was inevitable that those Africans who rose to senior positions would demand the same salaries and privileges enjoyed by expatriates. In consequence, many members of the black elite moved into government bungalows originally occupied by British public servants. They continued to be eligible for loans to build private houses, and they were entitled to advances to buy a motor-car and for various allowances to run it. Apart from inheriting the status and economic pattern of the colonial days, the newly created indigenous professionals also adopted many Western norms and living styles. As Kofi Busia remarked in 1956, the British "set standards which have determined the goals and aspirations, particularly of the new elite of educated Africans to whom the Europeans are a model."³¹

The new intelligentsia who were promoted to fill the places of the departed expatriates insisted on maintaining the material and status privileges of the colonial era. Indeed, one of the most prominent characteristics of this stratum was its extreme preoccupation with minor aspects of salary and other material perquisites. Attempts to reduce the benefits of public office, in the name of national austerity, have been met with iron resistance and appeals to professional imperatives and colonial precedent. In times of political conflict and economic uncertainty, it was these public servants who feared for their government positions. Such uncertainties were exacerbated by the high degree of competitiveness and insecurity engendered by accelerated public service promotions which were themselves a direct consequence of the policy to advance the pace of Africanisation. Those who benefited from rapid advancement may have felt inadequate in their posts and threatened by their better qualified subordinates; while the latter, in turn, became disgruntled at the slow rate of their own promotions.³²

During the period since Independence, the perennial struggle for control over governmental resources between layers of the elite, and between

politicians and bureaucratic or professional groups, has been accompanied by intra-institutional factionalism arising out of personal and group conflicts relating to status and economic rewards. And the question of prestige—with its attendant emphasis on material accumulation and conspicuous consumption—was of particular importance to the first cohort of status-sensitive officers, collectively yearning to overcome the almost universal low regard in which they were held.

Notes

1. W.F. Gutteridge, *Africa's Military Rulers—An Assessment* (London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict, Conflict Studies No.62, 1975), p.3.
2. *The Army List 1957* (London: HMSO, 1957), pp.2708–2709.
3. Computed from *The Army Lists 1951–57* (London: HMSO, 1951–1957). These figures exclude the 100 or so British contract officers alluded to in Table 3.1.
4. In 1951, Whistler announced that it was his policy to gradually dispense with British NCOs. Leadership courses for African NCOs were established at Teshie and the most promising students were sent to Britain for additional training. Progress in NCO localisation was quite rapid after Independence (between 1957–1959 more than 150 Ghanaians were trained abroad), but in September 1961 there were still 120 British WOs and NCOs, most of whom were employed in technical duties (signals, vehicle maintenance, pay, records, education, stores etc.).
5. A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), p.xvii.
6. Captain Tevie had also enlisted during the war, in 1943. He was discharged from service in 1945 but he re-enlisted in 1949, receiving his commission in August 1956.
7. Henceforth, and unless otherwise stated, all averages allude to the arithmetic mean.
8. The names of those officers who successfully completed secondary school (with dates of graduation) are as follows: J.A. Ankrah, Wesleyan Methodist School, Accra (1937); C.C. Bruce, Accra High School (1942); A.A. Crabbe, Asante Collegiate, Kumasi (1946); J.T. Addy, Accra Academy (1945); I.A. Ashitey, Odoggonno Secondary School (1949); D.K. Addo, Salem Secondary School (1950); and L.A. Okai, Achimota School (1951).
9. L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1972), pp.16–17.
10. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken*, pp.xiii–xvii.
11. Between 1949 and 1957, the Army Education Service frequently advertised for elementary school teachers with middle school certificates to teach illiterate infantrymen and their children. Despite its poor reputation, the army was able to attract civilian teachers by offering higher remuneration, good working conditions and other benefits.
12. W.F. Gutteridge, *Armed Forces in New States* (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1962), p.44.
13. For our purposes, Lieutenant Ewa, who was born in Lagos but became a naturalised Ghanaian, will be regarded as a southerner.
14. *1960 Population Census of Ghana* (Accra: Census Office, 1964).
15. The political outcome of this particular colonial legacy has been forcefully demonstrated in a number of African states. Differential recruitment patterns in the Sudan, for instance, led to the mutiny of southern troops against their northern

officers in August 1955. In Ghana there were apprehensions that, in the event of severe internal disorder in the North, northern soldiers might face a conflict of loyalties in carrying out pacification operations under southern officers. Interview, Major-General N.A. Aferi, 15 February 1974.

16. P. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965).

17. Professional, higher technical and clerical workers constituted 7 percent of Ghana's adult male labour force in the early 1960s, but they supplied 34 percent of male secondary school students and no less than 66 percent of the female students. On the other hand, farmers and fishermen, who accounted for over 62 percent of the employed adult male population, provided 37 percent and 12 percent of these respective samples. *Ibid.*, p.241.

18. *Ibid.*, p.117.

19. *Education Statistics 1963-64: Secondary Schools, Teacher Training Colleges and Technical Institutes* (Accra: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1969), pp.1 and 84.

20. Apart from this man, the Asafu-Adjaye clan has provided the armed services with two other officers: J.B.B. Asafu-Adjaye, who was commissioned into the Medical Service as a captain in March 1962, later rising to the rank of colonel; and A.B. Asafu-Adjaye, who was commissioned into the Nursing Service as a lieutenant in October 1964, reaching the rank of major by 1972.

21. A. Haywood and F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1964), p.81.

22. Even after the prohibition was withdrawn, Ashantis never joined the army in large numbers. During World War II, they provided less than 10 percent of the total Gold Coast military enlistment. Ashanti resentment against the army continued until at least 1960.

23. This aspect of recruitment has been emphasised in the wider literature: "Despite the material rewards that are offered, life in the military involves many arduous tasks and much physical discomfort. The military attracts recruits from aspiring social groups who are prepared to expose themselves to these discomforts because it does supply an avenue of social mobility." M. Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p.53.

24. Robin Luckham has suggested similarly high aspirations for achievement in modern bureaucratic occupational settings, especially the army, on the part of Nigerian Ibos in the 1950s. *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-67* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.188.

25. R. Oliver and J.D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin African Library, 1972), p.124.

26. The Ga Standfast Association was a protest movement which sprang up in mid-1957 in Accra. It was concerned with poor living conditions in the capital. The Ga Shifimo Kpee formed one of the component groups of the United Party when it was inaugurated in November 1957.

27. The percentage figures for the rest of the male workforce are as follows: sales workers, 4.3; farmers, fishermen, hunters, loggers and related workers, 62.8; miners, quarrymen and related workers, 2.0; transport and communication workers, 3.2; craftsmen, production process workers and labourers, 18.7; and service, sport and recreation workers, 2.5. Foster, *Education and Social Change*, p.57.

28. Calculated from T. Killick, "Labour: A General Survey," in W. Birmingham, I. Neustadt and E.N. Omaboe, (eds.), *A Study of Contemporary Ghana: The Economy of Ghana* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), p.131.

29. For a discussion on the subsequent consolidation of the "educated classes" across the generations, see D. Austin's chapter, "Et in Arcadia ego: politics and learning in Ghana," in his collected essays, *Ghana Observed* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), pp.167-196.

30. The division of employees between public and private sectors in the three top categories within the modern sector of the economy (listed as professional, technical, administrative, executive, managerial and clerical groups) was, respectively, 69 percent and 31 percent. 1960 *Population Census*, Table 50.

31. K.A. Busia, "The Present Situation and Aspirations of Elites in the Gold Coast," *International Social Science Bulletin* 8, 3 (1956), p.427. For an interesting discussion on the same theme, see G.H. Kimble, *Tropical Africa: Society and Policy* (Baltimore: Baltimore Press, 1961), pp.367-368.

32. P.C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp.317-319.

4

Developments in the Armed Forces: Expansion and Diversification

The principal change from Gold Coast Military Forces to Ghana Military Forces at the time of Independence was one of nomenclature.¹ The continuance of whites in the key military postings, the early uninterrupted dependence on Britain for advice, equipment and training facilities, as well as the maintenance of RWAFF insignia and uniforms—including the traditional red fez, zouave jacket, khaki shorts and cummerbund for ceremonial purposes—exemplified the role continuity of the security services when Ghana emerged from colonial crasis as a sovereign state. Also, the retention of European assistance undoubtedly tended to consolidate the Western professional ethos of an army's subordination to its political masters, thereby providing a tangible deterrent to unconstitutional action.

As with the armed forces of most ex-colonial African states, the organisational structures of the Ghanaian military were in many respects almost identical to those existing in the army of the metropole. This was so right down to most details of training, uniform, insignia and rank. It was also reflected in the social interactions and military *mores* of mess life learned during the period of colonial tutelage at Teshie, Eaton Hall, Sandhurst and in the Regiment. Contemporaneous reference groups for the adoption of gentlemanly and officer behaviour were provided by the large number of expatriates who remained in command of the army.²

In the garrison towns and military units visited by this writer in 1974 and 1975, the thread with the past and the resemblance of the army to its colonial progenitor was still very much in evidence: the Aldershot layout (admittedly improved by the hibiscus and bougainvillea); the routines, training procedures and disciplinary codes; the Battle Honours of past campaigns, regimental Colours, sports trophies and silver; officers with bristling moustaches, swagger-sticks, Sam Brownes and "Jolly good shows;" NCOs bawling out orders to their intimidated *bugabugas* (trainee soldiers) and the arm-wrenching salutes and ear-splitting "sahs." There were the dinner nights, Saturday afternoon drinks in the mess (Club beer and Guinness) and mid-morning "elevenses"—Milo drinking chocolate and groundnuts having replaced coffee and biscuits. Also in evidence were

schools for service children who were treated to an annual Christmas party complete with a white-bearded Santa Claus. Army magazines, family newsletters and shopping lists littered busy desks and "Don't Tell 'Em" security posters covered cracks on office walls. These features, together with the emphasis on field sports, all pointed to the continuing link with the past.

Other outward manifestations in the same vein included the prominence given by officers to cadet course photographs from England and group pictures of expatriate and African officers in the 1950s. In some cases, pride of place went to a signed photograph from a former British commander, usually Paley or Alexander. A retired colonel of my acquaintance had built himself a large villa in one of the leafier suburbs of Accra and called it "Aldershot House."

The organisational structures and cultural similarities derived from the colonial forces were also accompanied by continuity in the officially perceived function of the military. In March 1957, the job envisaged for the army was essentially the same as before. It would continue to have an "efficient" function, that of maintaining internal security and frontier defence.³ The "dignified" role of providing a vivid expression of the state's sovereignty with guards of honour, parades and Independence Day marches would also be performed.

To begin with, at least, the colonial pattern of the army was scarcely tampered with, and the CPP leadership—preoccupied with other matters of state—took little interest in the army it had acquired almost intact from Britain. No immediate attempt was made to redefine the role of the armed forces, nor were there demands for increases in defence expenditure. Realizing that their former West African possessions would not be militarily self-sufficient for some time to come, the British (in keeping with the recommendations made at the 1953 Lagos Conference) made arrangements for the continued provisions of training facilities and equipment. For several years after Independence, the Ghanaian Army continued to rely almost exclusively upon the former colonial power. On their part, the British military authorities believed that they would carry on running the armed forces until their protégés were capable of doing the job themselves. The transitional process was expected to take approximately a dozen years. During this period, African officers would be schooled in a policy that was designed to produce professionals in the metropolitan mould whose job was to soldier, leaving politics to the elected politicians. Indeed, of all Ghana's major institutions, the military seemed the least likely candidate to become a focus for inter-party controversy or national dispute.

But this symbiotic relationship was soon to change. Within two years, extensive plans had been initiated for the enlargement of the armed forces. These preparations included the creation of new battalions and other units for the army in addition to the purchase of aeroplanes for an air force and ships for a navy. It also involved diversifying sources of military assistance and increased reliance upon military aid from the socialist states of eastern Europe, China and Cuba. These moves, together with further indigenisation

of the officer corps and the establishment of a military academy, enabled Nkrumah to reduce Ghana's dependence on her former colonial master.

The main burden of this chapter, then, is to document these developments and to offer a cogent explanation for the institutional transformation of the inherited military format. Why was Kwame Nkrumah willing to spend large sums of Ghana's resources on new battalions, fast patrol boats and jet fighters—against all the counsel of his senior military advisers? And what lay behind the decision to break away from single dependence on Britain for military aid?

It will be argued that the key to these departures from established military practices and orientations lay, not in internal security requirements nor fear of outside attack, but in Nkrumah's foreign policy objectives. At his midnight pronouncement in Accra on 5 March 1957, the prime minister told his audience that "the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent."⁴

Nkrumah's vision of elevating the former Gold Coast colony to be the vanguard of African liberation involved the build-up of strong military forces. It also required the modification of Ghana's close connections with the British military establishment because such ties conflicted with Nkrumah's pan-African aspirations and his proclaimed policy of non-alignment. These strategies caused friction between the expatriate senior command, who believed the primary function of the armed forces lay in the area of internal security, and the CPP administration they served, which wanted to utilise the military for wider international aims.

Expansion and Modernisation

On the attainment of Independence in 1957, the 5,700 man Ghana Army was commanded by Major-General A.G. Paley who had been CDS since May 1954.⁵ It consisted of three infantry battalions, one stationed at Giffard Camp, Accra, one at Kaladan Barracks, Tamale, and the third at Ranchi Barracks, Takoradi. Army headquarters and support services were based in Accra. The Reconnaissance Squadron, which had been formed from the Gold Coast battery and equipped with armoured cars, was located at Gondar Barracks, also in the capital. Kumasi housed the Depot and the Boys' Company. Like a similar unit existing in Nigeria at that time, the Boys' Company was intended mainly for soldiers' sons. Both establishments were a potential source of officers, NCOs and technicians in the years ahead. The inter-territorial cadet school (ROSTS) was situated just outside Accra, at Whistler Barracks, Teshie.

During the first two years of Ghana's existence, there was only a tiny increase in the size of the armed forces, from 5,700 to 6,000 men. But early in 1958, the government appointed a National Security Committee to assess Ghana's military requirements. As a result of its recommendations, the defence estimates were substantially increased from \$9.35 million in 1958/59, to \$11.3 million in 1959/60, \$12.6 million in 1960/61 and \$42

million in 1961/62. By 1965, when the fiscal year coincided with the financial year, the Ministry of Defence estimates stood at \$47 million. This represented 8.4 percent of the total budget.⁶

Behind this rapid escalation in military expenditures lay Nkrumah's interest—encouraged by the radical wing of the CPP—in the liberation and unification of Africa. This objective is explained in the concluding paragraph of his autobiography:

It is our duty as the vanguard force to offer what assistance we can to those now engaged in the battles that we ourselves have fought and won. Our task is not done and our safety is not assured until the last vestiges of colonialism have been swept from Africa.⁷

A growing belief that change in South Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies could only be accomplished through armed intervention lay at the heart of Ghana's military build-up.

For the prime minister, political initiatives had to be backed by military power. Strong armed forces would increase Ghana's influence and ensure that Nkrumah's pan-African ambitions were taken seriously. The first concrete manifestation of these aspirations was the Ghana-Guinea Union of November 1958 and the proposal for an African High Command. The idea of African military cooperation was first discussed during the 1958 Independent African States Conference.⁸ Though the proposal went no further for two years, the concept re-emerged soon after the outbreak of the Congo crisis.

The enlargement of the armed forces was also related to considerations of national prestige, especially in relation to Nigeria—a country which, with its huge area, large population and valuable petroleum resources, was more naturally suited to assume the mantle of African leadership. Rivalry between the two states was encouraged by a small group of parliamentarians on both sides who did take an interest in military affairs. For instance, as far back as 1955, one Nigerian backbencher, R.A. Fani-Kayode, called for a programme of military expansion so as to "reach the God-ordained hegemony destined for Nigeria—supremacy south of the Sahara—sword in hand." And on another occasion, Chief Rotimi Williams publicly contemplated the possibility of Ghanaian military hostilities against Nigeria.⁹ The competition for national honour and prestige generated by such statements made Nkrumah all the more determined to enlarge and modernise the army which he regarded as the most visible symbol of his foreign policy objectives. An Armed Forces Day was proclaimed and when it was first celebrated in 1960 Nkrumah declared: "We are determined to build the best equipped and most efficient armed forces in modern Africa."¹⁰

An ambitious programme of military expansion and modernisation, based mainly on the National Security Committee's proposals, was announced in November 1958. The size of the army was to be increased by 50 percent within four years and plans were revealed to re-equip it with a squadron of *Ferret* and *Saladin* armoured vehicles, new mortars and the replacement of the *Lee-Enfield* with a modern automatic rifle (the FN SLR, the standard

British infantry weapon). In January 1963, the army numbered 8,500 officers and men.

The army was also to be supplemented by the formation of an Army Volunteer Force for mobilisation in times of national emergency. By 1965, the officer strength of the 180-strong body stood at sixteen. Existing military accommodation at Kumasi and Accra was refurbished and married quarters were provided for sergeants in Kumasi and for officers at Whistler and Giffard Camps. In 1960, new barracks were built at Teshie and Ho.¹¹

Plans were also announced to set up a Ghana Military Academy in order to ensure that sufficient numbers of officers would be available for the enlarged military forces. In January 1958, it will be remembered, control of the Regular Officers Special Training School was transferred from the British Military Adviser, West Africa Command, to the military forces of Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. This inter-territorial cadet school was closed down in March 1960, to be replaced in April by the Military Academy and Training School (MATS) for the exclusive use of Ghanaian cadets from all three services.

To obviate the difficulty of recruiting new teachers at short notice, the ROSTS educational staff (Captains Watts, Hilton and Whitaker of the Royal Army Education Corps and Captain Okoe of the Ghana Army Educational Service) were invited to stay on under a new Director of Studies, Mr W.W. Stallybrass, a senior lecturer sent on loan from Sandhurst.¹² Equal importance was attached in the eighteen-month course to both military and academic subjects. Interestingly, formal tuition in "military customs" was also included in the MATS programme. Thursday became the "European diet day" when the weekly dinner night was held. Sports played included hockey, squash and cricket. There was also a photographic club, a dramatic society and clubs for sailing, farming and adventure training. Military exercises took place in the Tema and Winneba areas as well as at Bundase, Larteh area and Amedzofe. While there was a conscious effort to inculcate the Sandhurst tradition in Ghana, it was not long, nevertheless, before the Academy had developed its own idiosyncrasies: tribal dancing replaced the after-dinner mess games and horseplay, which the African cadets had never really enjoyed, and vernacular slang such as *sabisabi* (smart-alec), *akpala* (a cadet with no appointment) and *kaato kaato* (morning jog) jostled for place with their imported equivalents.¹³

Army Officer Recruitment: 1957–1966

As Table 4.1 shows, after Independence there was a significant increase in the number of African commissionings. A start was also made on the recruitment of black officers into Arms/Services other than the Infantry. By the end of 1958, the number of Ghanaian officers had more than doubled, from the March 1957 figure of twenty-nine, to fifty-nine. Only seven indigenes had been commissioned during 1957; the 1958 figure of twenty-four new commissions was more than treble this. At the end of

TABLE 4.1
COMMISSIONINGS^a OF GHANAIAAN ARMY OFFICERS BY YEAR AND ARM, 1947 - 31 December 1966^b

Year	Arm ^c															Total p.a.
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
1947	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
1948	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1949	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1950	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
1951	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
1952	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1953	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
1954	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1955	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1956	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1957	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1958	9	1	1	1	3	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	5	24
1959	6	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	3	-	-	10	24
1960	12	3	-	1	-	-	-	3	2	2	2	6	1	1	3	36
1961	37	5	1	2	2	2	1	-	4	1	2	6	-	4	19	86
1962	90	3	6	6	6	6	2	-	4	10	1	5	-	4	13	156
1963	54	5	3	5	10	-	6	4	4	5	2	6	-	1	4	109
1964	25	2	2	4	3	4	5	1	4	5	2	4	1	1	6	69
1965	22	2	6	3	2	4	3	1	1	6	8	1	6	-	3	68
1966	24	5	12	1	6	2	7	-	3	8	-	11	-	5	2	86
Total	314	27	31	24	32	19	25	10	23	38	18	43	8	16	65	693 ^d

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); Ghana Gazette 1959-1962; and interviews with Ministry of Defence officials.

^a These include both regular and short service commissions. However, a large proportion of short service officers obtained regular commissions after three years service.

^b As noted in Table 3.4, only one African officer, S.K. Antony, was awarded a commission before this period.

^c The Arm/Service code is as follows: A: Infantry; B: Reconnaissance; C: Engineers; D: Signals; E: Supply and Transport; F: Ordnance; G: Electrical and Mechanical Engineers; H: Chaplains (3 Methodists, 3 Presbyterians, 2 Catholics, 1 Anglican and 1 Muslim); I: Medical/Dental; J: Pay; K: Education; L: Nursing; M: Women Auxiliary Corps; N: Volunteer Force; O: General.

^d 24 officers commissioned between 1947-1966 left the army by 31 December 1966.

1959—a year in which twenty-four African cadets received commissions as in the previous year—there were eighty-three Ghanaian officers in the army. This figure had increased to 119 by Christmas 1960 and to 205 by December 1961. Thus, in less than fifty months the African officer corps multiplied more than fivefold. By mid-1963, it had doubled to over 400, growing to 470 by January 1964 and to almost 700 at the end of 1966.

However, not every officer commissioned during this period was still serving in the army in December 1966. Some, for instance M.A. Otu, Ashley-Lassen, Beausoleil and Bonsu, had transferred to the air force; two had been killed (Michel in September 1961 in an air crash, and Barwah during the *coup d'état* of 1966); two, Ankrah and S.J.A. Otu, had been dismissed from their posts in September 1965 (although Ankrah was brought out of retirement to head the NLC in February 1966); several, Hansen and Quaye for example, had joined the navy and another, Awhaitey, had been court-martialed.¹⁴ In addition, approximately twelve other (short service) officers had left the army for civilian jobs.

Until early in 1958, all African officers were commissioned into the Infantry battalions, irrespective of whether they had served with other army branches (usually the Education and Pay Services) as WOs or NCOs. But in 1958, apart from an intake of nine Infantry officers, Ghanaians were commissioned into nine other Arms/Services: five, Lieutenants E.R. Amenyah, S. Asafo, E.N. Dedjoe, S.C. Lamptey and Second-Lieutenant K. Enimayew, into the General (Quartermaster) Branch; three, Lieutenant W.C.O. Acquaye-Nortey and Second-Lieutenants D.A. Iddisah and E.A. Yeboah into Supply and Transport; and one each into Reconnaissance (Lieutenant M.K. Gbagonah), Ordnance (Lieutenant H.A. Appiah), Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (Second-Lieutenant D.A. Lartey), Education (Lieutenant M.O. Okoe), and Nursing (Lieutenant J.E. Djan, the first Ghanaian woman to be commissioned).

The following year, Africans entered three other branches previously occupied solely by British officers: Lieutenant L.O. Koranteng became the first Ghanaian doctor to join the Medical/Dental Services; his brother, Lieutenant M.O. Koranteng, entered the Pay Service; and Major J.C. Koomson was commissioned as an army chaplain (Methodist). In 1960, sixty-one year old Second-Lieutenant A. Casely-Hayford became the first Ghanaian to be commissioned into the Army Volunteer Force.¹⁵ The same year, twenty-one year old Lieutenant C.K. Debrah was the first officer to be commissioned into the Women Auxiliary Corps.

Subsequent developments to the end of 1966 may be examined in Table 4.1 where it can be seen that the most significant numerical increase in African officer recruitment occurred in 1962. In that year, 57.7 percent (that is ninety) of the 156 newly commissioned officers entered the Infantry, a somewhat higher proportion than was the case for the entire 1947–1966 period when 45.3 percent (314) of the 693 officers were commissioned into the Infantry. The very large number of Ghanaian commissions in 1962 can be explained by Nkrumah's decision, in September 1961, to expel all British

officers from his army. Why this was done, and how a sufficient number of replacements was found, are issues which will be addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Even before September 1961, however, the expansion of the military establishment saw a partial shift away from the pre-1957 and early post-Independence goal of incrementally phasing Africans into the middle and higher officer posts. Thus, the three most senior Ghanaians, Ankrah, Michel and S.J.A. Otu, were promoted lieutenant-colonel and given command of the infantry battalions in 1959 and 1960. In terms of age (the three officers were all in their early forties in 1959), the promotions should not in any way be considered exceptional; but in terms of experience, they deviated significantly from the twenty years officer service usually required before attaining that rank.¹⁶ Otu, who took command of the Third Battalion in August 1959, had been commissioned as recently as May 1948. Michel, who was appointed to the Second Battalion command in December 1959, had served as an officer for only eleven and a half years. When Ankrah was appointed Commanding Officer (CO) of the First Battalion in March 1960, he had seen thirteen years officer service—still seven years short of the norm. This pattern of politically, rather than professionally, inspired accelerated promotions assumed almost ludicrous proportions after Nkrumah's dismissal of his British officers.

Behind these changes lay the prime minister's increasing sensitivity about the racial composition of his officer corps—particularly following the Independent African States Conference and the Ghana-Guinea Union. For Nkrumah, the domination of British officers in the senior army command jarred with Ghana's posture as the radical leader of Africa's fight against white colonial jurisdiction. This view was not shared by the Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General Victor Paley. He believed that if professional standards were to be maintained, Africanisation of the army could not be completed before 1970. In the event, localisation of the army was completed nine years earlier than this.

By 1966, the army had been expanded to approximately 14,000 men with an officer strength (in December) of 670. It was then the largest army in West Africa (Nigeria came next with 10,500) and eighth in Africa as a whole, the cost of maintaining it being the fifth highest on the continent.¹⁷ Two new battalions, the Fourth and Fifth, were raised in 1961; the Sixth Battalion, which grew out of a Parachute unit formed in 1963, was established in April 1964.¹⁸ The Second Infantry Brigade Group was officially formed in 1961 to accommodate the battalions formed in the same year. As well as these developments, Nkrumah transformed his small Presidential Guard into a two battalion President's Own Guard Regiment (POGR), a move much resented by regular officers who (correctly) believed the Regiment to have been created as a counter-weight to the army. What is important for this study's purposes is that, unlike the innovations introduced with regard to the regular armed services, the POGR *was* expanded for an internal security role—an aspect of crucial importance which will be returned to in Chapter 7.

The Navy and Air Force

Plans were also announced for the foundation of a navy and an air force.¹⁹ Against the advice of the British, who regarded a navy as superfluous to Ghana's needs, a maritime service was inaugurated in 1959 when two ex-Royal Navy 120-ton inshore minesweepers, GNS *Yogaga* and GNS *Afadzato*, armed with 40-mm. and 20-mm. guns, arrived from the United Kingdom. In 1962, two Glasgow-built seaward defence boats with 40-mm. guns, GNS *Elmina* and GNS *Komenda*, ordered the preceding year, were commissioned. Two new 600-ton corvettes, GNS *Keta* and GNS *Kromantse*, ordered from Vospers in 1961, were delivered in 1967. These were capable of surface, anti-aircraft and anti-submarine action and of carrying out shore bombardment to a range of five miles inland. By 1965, there were also four Soviet P-class (less than 100 tons) fast patrol boats in service in addition to GNS *Achimota*, a World War II British yacht that served a dual role as training ship and Flagship.²⁰ One other vessel, a frigate designed to accommodate anti-submarine devices as well as the now legendary "play-ground area" with 4-star hotel suites, Regency-style furnishings and ice-cream machine, was ordered from Britain. Ghana received a \$19 million loan for the vessel, but following the coup the order was cancelled.

Small naval bases were established at Tema, where the floating mobile repair craft GNS *Asuantsi* was moored, and at Takoradi. Naval headquarters were established at Burma Camp, Accra. Basic training of ratings was also carried out at Tema, while most specialist training took place at Takoradi as well as in Portsmouth, England. Some repair and maintenance work was possible at the Ghana bases, but all major overhauls and refit work was done at Vospers shipyards in Southampton or at the Royal Naval Dockyard at Gibraltar. From its inception, the Ghana Navy was used for anti-smuggling and anti-poaching patrols as well as for search-and-rescue and surveying operations, often in collaboration with the air force.²¹

From 1960 to 1966, four or five Ghanaian cadets were also sent each year to the Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), Dartmouth. The first four to go to Dartmouth, after the six-month Teshie course, were A.A. Anatsui, G. Bedu-Addo, J.D.M. Boham and D.C. Damah. By early 1967, eighty-seven Ghanaian naval officers and 740 ratings were either serving in their home bases or under training with the Royal Navy. There were also twenty-seven officers and forty senior ratings from the Royal Navy in command and training posts. However, in September 1961, an African, Commodore David Hansen (who had transferred from the army in July 1961), had replaced Commodore Foreman as Chief of Naval Staff. British personnel still commanded the two corvettes and the *Achimota* in mid-1967, but by 1969 the seconded officers had been phased out. Since then, Ghana has continued to send naval cadets to Dartmouth as well as to Canada and India.

As in the army, the navy was supplemented by a small 200-strong Volunteer Force which was established when two British officers, Lieutenant

C.D. Wilkinson and Sub-Lieutenant T.M. Kilbridge, arrived to take up their appointments in October 1959.

Under the supervision of Indian and Israeli teams, preparations for the establishment of the Ghana Air Force (GhAF) were actually begun in April 1959—some months before a public announcement was made that Ghana was to have such a service. A flying school with twelve *Marut* trainers was established by the Indians at Afienya (the school was later moved to Takoradi), and aircraft maintenance personnel and wireless technicians were trained by a small Israeli team at the Accra-based Air Force Trade Training School.

Initially, Britain did not favour the formation of an air force, arguing that Ghana could ill-afford the high costs involved in such a venture. But in 1960, Britain agreed to institute a new training and supply programme for the GhAF on condition that the Indian and Israeli teams were withdrawn. It was felt that there would be chaos if three countries were involved in training a small new air force. Nkrumah consented to this in May 1960, with the result that all three services were run by British training teams. However, this state of affairs did not last very long.

The first operational aircraft bought by Ghana were single-engined planes: fourteen *Beavers* and twelve *Otters* from Canada. These were followed by eight twin-engined *Caribou* transport aircraft, also from Canada, and four *Illyushin-18s* from the Soviet Union.²² The concentration on transporters was largely a consequence of the Congo crisis when Ghana's early efforts to move troops to the war-torn country were thwarted by inadequate transport arrangements. Britain also supplied a large number of aircraft between 1960–1963: twelve *Chipmunk* trainers, three *Heron* transports and nine *Whirlwind* and *Wessex* helicopters. Early 1966 saw the formation of a jet-fighter ground attack squadron of seven Italian *Aermacchi MB-326s* (three of which were crashed within two years but later replaced) under the supervision of Italian air force instructors.

Men who had been commissioned into the army provided the first pool of officer material for the air force—as was also true for the navy. The first to change service, in 1960, were M.A. Otu (the first Ghanaian to command the air force), C.M. Beausoleil and N.Y.R. Ashley-Lassen. Beausoleil and Ashley-Lassen, both Sandhurst graduates, were subsequently sent to the Flying Training School, at Ternhill in England. On top of these, fourteen officers who had recently completed the Ghana Military Academy course were sent to the Flying Training School in October 1960.²³ By early 1966, the air force consisted of approximately 800 men and ninety officers, by which time the USSR was busy constructing a new airfield base near Tamale in northern Ghana.²⁴

Apart from its major official role in the defence of Ghana, the air force was often used for medical evacuation flights, surveys, photographic missions and similar work for the civil authorities. It has also been used for aerial spraying during anti-malarial operations. A Rescue Coordination Centre, in collaboration with the army and navy, was established in the early 1960s

to provide a twenty-four hour stand-by in case assistance was needed by service or civilian authorities. In most cases this has involved fishermen, many of whom have to be rescued.

As with the decision to expand and modernise the army, the creation of two new services was related to Nkrumah's wider foreign policy objectives and to his search for international recognition and prestige. In the British view, Ghana had no requirement for a navy or an air force; but once a decision to create the new services had been made, the former colonial power attempted to control their progress by an active interest in their development. However, Nkrumah was determined that the armed forces should divest themselves of their almost exclusive reliance on British military training aid and *matériel*. In this he achieved limited success.

Diversifying Military Assistance

While British influence in the early expansion of the armed forces between 1958–1961 was considerably more prominent than that of any other country—apart from the provision of almost all expatriate staff and military equipment, forty-three Ghanaian army cadets had trained at Sandhurst and thirty-five at Eaton Hall by the end of 1961 (see Table 4.2)—Ghana made considerable progress towards its goal of variegating the pattern of military assistance.²⁵

New states have often exhibited a tendency to move away from single reliance on the former metropolitan power for economic and military aid to a multiple dependency upon several foreign countries. This usually results from the ex-colony's desire to emphasise its independence and non-alignment. It is also the outcome of perennial international competition to gain economic and ideological footholds in the new states. And, as Coleman and Brice have noted, diversification of dependency relationships encourages competitive bidding by external powers, thereby maximising the amount of aid proffered.²⁶

On the other hand, there is a solid practical case for continuing close military links with the former colonial power. These arguments range from the distinct financial and administrative advantages to be gained from maintaining continuity in equipment and training, to the serious organisational disruptions inherent in the modification or frequent substitution of weapons systems and training methods. Also, by accepting assistance from diverse sources, the possibility exists of creating internal rifts in the armed forces, perhaps in the form of officer cliques educated in a variety of traditions. Often, however, such considerations are subordinated to wider political imperatives. For Nkrumah, "true" independence became an important concept; he was determined that Ghana should show the way in Africa's fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

For these reasons, besides equipment and advisory and training programmes for the three services from Britain, Ghana obtained: thirty-four Canadian aircraft and assistance in cadet and administrative training (most of the Canadians were assigned to the MATS) under a 1961 agreement; a Soviet

TABLE 4.2
GHANAIAN ARMY OFFICER CADETS TRAINING
IN BRITAIN, 1947-1967^a

Year of entry	Sandhurst ^b	Eaton Hall ^b	Total ^b	Number of commissions p.a. ^c
1947	-	-	-	2 (2)
1948	-	-	-	1 (3)
1949	-	2 (2)	2 (2)	0 (3)
1950	-	1 (3)	1 (3)	2 (5)
1951	-	1 (4)	1 (4)	3 (8)
1952	-	1 (5)	1 (5)	0 (8)
1953	1 (1)	- (5)	1 (6)	3 (11)
1954	1 (2)	5 (10)	6 (12)	5 (16)
1955	1 (3)	6 (16)	7 (19)	6 (22)
1956	3 (6)	3 (19)	6 (25)	6 (28)
1957	1 (7)	1 (20)	2 (27)	7 (35)
1958	10 (17)	6 (26)	16 (43)	24 (59)
1959	8 (25)	2 (28)	10 (53)	24 (83)
1960	10 (35)	3 (31)	13 (66)	36 (119)
1961	8 (43)	4 (35)	12 (78)	86 (205)
1962	8 (51)	9 (44) ^d	17 (95)	156 (361)
1963	4 (55)	- (44)	4 (99)	109 (470)
1964	4 (59)	- (44)	4 (103)	69 (539)
1965	4 (63)	- (44)	4 (107)	68 (607)
1966	9 (72)	- (44)	9 (116)	86 (693)
1967	6 (78)	- (44)	6 (122)	76 (769)
Total	78	44	122	769

Sources: As for Table 3.2.

^a The figures take into consideration those officers who received army commissions but who were subsequently transferred to the navy (e.g. Quaye and Hansen) or air force (e.g. Beausoleil and M.A. Otu).

^b Figures in brackets are the total number of army cadets trained and training in Britain by the end of each year from 1947.

^c These include all army commissions as shown under the headings A-O in Table 4.1. Figures in brackets are the total number of army commissions from 1947.

^d 1962 was the last year that Ghanaian cadets trained at Eaton Hall due to the fact that Ghana's own Academy, at Teshie, was opened in 1961. However, selection for Sandhurst continued.

offer to train 400 officer cadets in the USSR (in the event, only seventy-six cadets were found for the course), the *Illyushins* noted above and arms, many of which, including a squadron of armoured patrol cars, were out of date and soon out of action through lack of spare parts;²⁷ Soviet and East German help in the training of Nkrumah's Presidential Guard and the development of intelligence services; Yugoslav assistance in the construction and financing of the Takoradi naval base following an agreement in 1960 and eventually completed in 1968; substantial Soviet technical aid in the construction of the vast Tamale air force base which, incidentally, earned the USSR a sizeable profit;²⁸ Italian *Aermacchi* jets and Indian and Israeli aid in establishing the air force; some financial, training and advisory assistance from the United States, Pakistan and India, as well as a limited quantity of small arms purchased from Australia and New Zealand.²⁹

In October 1962, the People's Republic of China agreed to provide a loan for the establishment of two arms factories but the credit was never utilised. Two years later, a secret agreement was signed with Peking for the provision of military equipment and advisers for Ghana's "freedom fighters." The first group of Chinese guerrilla warfare experts led by Colonels Yen Leng and Sun Hung-Wen came to Ghana in September 1964. They were employed to expand the number of camps and training programmes for Nkrumah's "secret army."

According to reliable documentary evidence made available by the NLC, Nkrumah recruited individuals from Niger, Upper Volta (as it was then), Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Burundi and elsewhere with the aim of training them for subversive action against their own countries. Secret camps were located at Berekum, Wa, Navrongo, Yendi, Obenemasi, Okponglo and at least thirty other sites. Training was provided by Russians and Cubans as well as by Chinese. One booklet, published in 1966, claims that Nkrumah "began to plot against these countries, planning to replace their leaders with people who had been trained in Ghana in methods of violent revolution. The methods that were to be employed included guerilla warfare, sabotage, terrorism, and assassination."³⁰

Lastly, in 1965, following a year of internal unrest and a number of assassination attempts on himself, Kwame Nkrumah concluded a substantial arms deal with the Soviet Union for the purchase of weapons for the Presidential Guard: 24 pieces of light artillery, 21 medium infantry mortars, 15 anti-aircraft guns, 20 heavy machine-guns and a large quantity of ammunition.³¹

But although Nkrumah was relatively successful in diversifying sources of military aid and reducing Ghana's single dependency upon London, the bulk of armaments and assistance continued to come from Britain and the Commonwealth. This reflected not only the influence exerted by British expatriate officers and the generally pro-West attitudes of the black officers, but also the enormous administrative and financial difficulties of switching sources of supply and training.

The decision to take advantage of training aid offered by Canada, India and Pakistan caused minimal administrative or structural dislocation since

the training methods and institutional patterns of the Commonwealth armies were (and are today) almost identical to those of the British military from which they had sprung. However, had such a policy been continued, the move to send cadets to the Soviet Union would certainly have caused severe organisational strains in the armed forces. In the event, all Soviet assistance was terminated when the NLC broke off diplomatic relations with the USSR following the 1966 coup.³²

British Reactions

So far this chapter has argued that a single critical factor lay behind the changes in Ghana's defence orientations. This was the CPP leadership's desire to integrate the military into its dual foreign policy initiatives of non-alignment and pan-Africanism. In order to demonstrate his country's commitment to positive neutralism and African unity, strong armed forces, including a navy and an air force, were a *sine qua non* in Nkrumah's eyes. By accepting military (and economic) assistance from several sources, Nkrumah attempted to foster credibility for his ambitious foreign objectives. In short, ideological and continental political considerations, meshed with questions of national honour and the desire for increased influence and prestige, were the key elements in the twin process of expansion and diversification.

Of course, enlargement of the armed forces necessitated greater numbers of officers and by 1960, as will be emphasised in the next two chapters, the government had become much more interested in the question of localisation. In fact—quite apart from the appointment, in 1959–1960, of Africans to the battalion commands—almost one hundred Ghanaians had been commissioned into the army within three years of Independence. As Table 4.2 shows, more than half of these had trained in Britain. The very rapid increase in the number of black officers after this period was only made possible by Ghana's decision to have her own military academy. As one would expect, the expanded role and increased national recognition for the army was favourably received by the African officers who had long been used to public opprobrium.³³

However, Nkrumah's plans for the simultaneous modernisation and augmentation of his forces encountered resistance from the expatriate command. When Major-General Alexander arrived in Ghana to take over from Paley in 1960, he found himself confronted with a dilemma that had not been resolved by his predecessor. Paley believed that one brigade consisting of three battalions and supporting services was perfectly adequate for Ghana's security needs, an assessment which hardly squared with Nkrumah's designs for a division-sized army of nine battalions—let alone frigates and jet-fighter squadrons.

The British officers feared that rapid change would lower standards and undermine their efforts to create a stable and pro-British army. By 1960, the British concept of a professional army had already been diluted by the premature promotion of Ankrah, Michel and Otu and their appointments

to command the three infantry battalions. The changes reflected political, not military, imperatives.

Efforts to reach a compromise between the president's grandiose and expensive schemes and a more realistic appraisal of the republic's military requirements have been described by Alexander:

Throughout my stay in Ghana there was this constant conflict between wishing to Ghanaianise rapidly and at the same time not wishing to see the efficiency of Ghana's armed forces deteriorate. The situation was complicated by the fact that Nkrumah wanted his army to be doubled and be given the best of modern equipment.³⁴

The CDS quickly came to the conclusion that there was little use in following Paley's hard-line arguments against expansion, "but that one had to try and fulfil President Nkrumah's wishes, so far as this was practicable."³⁵

Amongst the papers General Paley had left in Accra was a programme for the total localisation of the armed forces by 1970. Under CPP pressure, Alexander produced a plan in August 1961 for the completion of indigenisation by 1962. As it turned out, even this was not quick enough; for a month later, all British officers had been replaced by Ghanaians. The catalytic agent of change in the abrupt reversal of the earlier policy of gradual Africanisation was the Congo crisis, an event Nkrumah considered to be crucial in the fight for African liberation.

Once again, international considerations were to play a vital part in the institutional modification of the military establishment. Moreover, the president's decision to expel the white officers—a direct consequence of his Congo policy—occurred after the celebrated Awhaitey incident in which it was alleged that a section of the army planned to murder Nkrumah. In the next chapter, it will be shown how the conflicting demands of domestic security requirements versus foreign policy objectives manifested themselves in two apparently unrelated incidents. We will then be in a better position to explain (in Chapter 6) the immediate and longer-term consequences of precipitous localisation on the internal condition of the armed forces.

Notes

1. It was not until 6 March 1959, when Ghana severed its connection with the RWAFF, that the army officially became known as the Ghana Army.

2. In his account of the Nigerian Army, Robin Luckham devotes a whole chapter (IV) to what he calls "the gentleman ethic." He argues that "the poor educational qualifications of army officers . . . tended to reinforce the gentleman ethic and not to dilute it, as one might have expected. Low prestige led them to search for their own differentiated sphere of military honour with which to protect and validate their position in society." *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-67* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.109. Many of his observations are equally pertinent to the African officers in Ghana during the 1950s.

3. The majority of new states in Africa have at least one uneasy frontier; this is more often than not due to what is commonly described as "tribal overspill." Thus, frontier responsibilities are often associated with the internal security situation. In Ghana such threats in this connection have come from irredentist groups of Ewes in south-eastern Ghana and Togo. See Dennis Austin, "The Uncertain Frontier: Ghana-Togo," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 1, 2 (June 1963), pp.141-157.

4. K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p.62.

5. Major-General (later Sir) Victor Paley, who joined the British Army in February 1923, commanded the First Battalion, the Rifle Brigade (1943-1945) and 47 London Infantry Brigade (1951-1954), taking up his post as GOC and CDS, Ghana, between 1954-1960. He died aged seventy-two in Sydney in April 1976. *The Times*, 14 April 1976.

6. Computed from *The Annual Estimates 1958-1965* (Accra: Government Printer, 1958-1965); and *Ghana Gazette*, issues 29 July 1960, pp.54-55; 30 March 1961, p.191 and 25 May 1962, p.429. See, too, *Ghana 1964 Statistical Yearbook* (Accra: Bureau of Statistics, 1967), *passim*. Because figures from various sources are given in different currencies (until July 1965, G£1 = £1, after which C2.40 = \$1. The NC appeared in February 1967 valued at \$1.40), and for the sake of consistency, estimates have been converted to US dollars.

7. K. Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Nelson, 1957), p.163.

8. W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p.49. In 1959, the Ghana-Guinea Union envisaged a situation where "there would be a common defence policy, but each state would have its own Army." *The Times*, 4 May 1959.

9. In Ghana, demands for an increase in the defence budget were frequently heard from R.R. Amponsah and M.K. Apaloo, both of whom were apparently trying to curry favour with sections of the military establishment for their own political purposes (as discussed in Chapter 5). For a more detailed analysis of the military competition between the two states, see N. Miners, *The Nigerian Army 1956-1966* (London: Methuen, 1971), Chapter IV, from which the Nigerian examples are borrowed.

10. K. Nkrumah, *Speech to the Cadets of the Ghana Military Academy*, 15 April 1960 (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1960).

11. Details provided in the 1959-1961 issues of *Ghana Gazette*. By 1960, the police had practically completed rebuilding all their accommodation and had good barracks throughout the country.

12. The first MATS Commandant was Lt.-Colonel T.B.G. Slessor. Major K. Shapland, who had been Officer Commanding (OC) of ROSTS since the end of 1957, became the first OC of the Military Academy. Interview, Mr W.W. Stallybrass, 31 March 1980. Stallybrass was also employed to translate Nkrumah's correspondence with Lumumba into French.

13. Details from *The Square: Journal of the Ghana Military Academy* 2, (July 1961); and interviews with Teshie graduates.

14. See Chapter 5.

15. At the end of 1966, the officer element of the Volunteer Force consisted of one major, three captains, five lieutenants and five second-lieutenants. Most of these officers were elderly. Major Casely-Hayford, for instance, was born in 1899 and one of the captains, Davey-Hayford, was born in 1903.

16. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that pre-commission military service counted towards officer service. The three officers benefited from generous seniority antedates. Ankrah, for example, was given antedate as second-lieutenant to March 1938, March 1941 as a lieutenant and July 1946 as a captain—even though he was not actually commissioned until March 1947.

17. D. Wood, *The Armed Forces of African States* (London: The Institute for Strategic Studies, 1966), pp.28–29.

18. The Third Battalion was disbanded in February 1961 following the Tshiakiapa mutiny (see Chapter Five). It was re-formed in 1963.

19. Details from interviews with Lt.-Commander J.Nkrumah (staff officer, Naval HQ), Lt.-Commander J. Asibey-Bonsu (Director of Technical Division, Naval HQ), Brigadier C. Beausoleil (Air Force Commander), Major A.M. Nkansah (CO, Air Force Station, Burma Camp), and Major S. Gyabaah (staff officer, Air Force HQ). See, too, *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1,1 (February 1967), pp.30–33.

20. The Ghana Navy ensign is based on its British counterpart: a red cross on a white background with the Ghana flag in the top left-hand corner. In many other respects, the Ghana Navy remained almost a carbon copy of the Royal Navy with the same service language, rules and conventions. The officers (many of whom sport beards) wear white ducks, gold braid and white patent shoes; the ratings are to be seen in navy-blue bell-bottom trousers.

21. By 1975, the total strength of the navy stood at 1,300; this included 132 officers. Another ex-Royal Navy minesweeper, GNS *Ejura*, and two new fast patrol boats from West Germany, GNS *Sahene* and GNS *Dela*, had also been commissioned by that time. *West Africa*, 22 and 29 December 1975.

22. Originally in 1961, eight of the *Illyushins* were purchased on credit at more than \$1.5 million each. But four of these were later returned when it became apparent that they were too costly for Ghana to operate, the remaining four being transferred to Ghanaian Airways.

23. These were C. Amegatcher, E.W. Ammamoo, E. Brakhiapa, A.K.J. Dogbe, A. Dumashie, G. Glawu, K.A. Jackson, T.T. Kutin, A.N. Nkansah, C. Owusu-Agyemang, K.K. Pumpuni, J.B. Sapon, D.A.K. Seshie and R.K. Zumah.

24. By December 1975, the Canadian and Soviet transports and most of the *Chipmunks* had been replaced by two squadrons of eight *Islander* and six *Skyvan* transport aircraft, a communications and liaison squadron with six *Fokker-27s* and an HS-125 VIP transport aircraft, and six *Bulldog* trainers (with six more on order); while the ageing *Whirlwinds* and *Wessexes* had been replaced by two *Bell-212s*, three *Alouette-IIIBs* and three *Hughes-269s*. The air force consisted of 1,250 men and 120 officers.

25. For an interesting and informative analysis on the military relations between Britain and Africa, see A. Clayton, *The Military Relations between Great Britain and Commonwealth Countries, with particular reference to the African Commonwealth Nations*, unpublished paper delivered to the Anglo-Paris Colloquium on Independence and Dependence: The Relations of Britain and France to their former territories, Paris, 6–8 May 1976.

26. J.S. Coleman and B. Brice, "The Role of the Military in Sub-Saharan Africa," in J.J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.385.

27. In 1963, the Soviet Union also presented an *Mi-4* helicopter to Nkrumah as a personal gift. The same year, the first Ghanaians qualified as rotocraft pilots.

28. Western diplomats serving in Ghana in the early 1960s believed that the USSR's long-term aim was to use the airfield as a staging-post for their own aircraft

in a wider plan for the strategic penetration of Africa. Because of an undertaking given, these sources are not identified here.

29. Between 1960-1966, the Indian Military Academy took four Ghanaians a year. Pakistan accepted one officer cadet in 1960. Since then, one place has been reserved for a Ghanaian each year at the Pakistan Staff College, Quetta. The United States provided \$207,000 of grant aid up to 1963 and then none until after the coup.

30. *Nkrumah's Subversion of Africa* (Accra: Ministry of Information, November 1966), p.iii. See, too, *Nkrumah's Deception of Africa* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1967) for case studies of these subversive activities. Further details from interviews with Colonel E.A. Yeboah who located the Obenemasi camp on the day of the 1966 coup.

31. Additional sources for this section on aid diversification are H. Kitchen, *A Handbook of African Affairs* (London: Pall Mall, 1964), pp.200-202; and R.C. Sellers (ed.), *Armed Forces of the World: A Reference Handbook* (New York: Praeger, 1971), pp.94-95.

32. As will be seen in Chapter 7, the idea of training Ghanaians in eastern Europe was received less than enthusiastically by the British CDS and his white and black officers. The cadets sent to Russia returned somewhat disillusioned with their experience there.

33. Changes in the domestic reputation and self-esteem of the forces will be examined later, in Chapter 6.

34. H.T. Alexander, *African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (London: Pall Mall, 1965), pp.12-13.

35. *Ibid.*, p.14.

5

Politics and the Army: Domestic Developments and the Congo Crisis

At Independence, armies were not generally considered to be key elements in the political equation of African states and a military career looked one of the least promising avenues to political influence. Such a view was enhanced by a general belief that the metropolitan powers were successfully indoctrinating their armed protégés with the Western model of civil-military relations. Pye had assumed that the future of black Africa would be determined largely by Westernised intellectuals, socialistically-inclined bureaucrats, nationalist ruling parties and perhaps by “menacing Communist parties.”¹ Also, at an Ibadan University conference in 1962, Lloyd remarked that there was little evidence of military participation in the social and political life of the recently created African states.² This evaluation was not challenged (in fact it was endorsed) by several leading commentators of the day.³ And within these territories the dilatory pace of officer localisation and the late transfer of responsibility “encouraged both apathy and ignorance about the armed forces among the emerging African elite.”⁴

One of the few individuals to discern an alternative trend was Samuel Finer. Arguing that military regimes were more likely to triumph over a number of other possible prospects for new states—civilian quasi-democracy, civilian open democracy and civilian totalitarianism—he wrote: “Of all the alternatives . . . the most probable is some form or other of military intervention, possibly indirect or ‘dual,’ but more often than not overt and direct.”⁵

In retrospect, it seems surprising that the political significance of the armed forces was not more fully anticipated. The small size of Africa’s embryonic armies, in terms of organisational as well as human resources (see Table 5.1), led scholars to minimise the military threat. However, the virtual monopoly of organised state violence enjoyed by the military (and police) forces in societies where the central political symbols and institutions were weak, enabled small groups of soldiers to seize power with relative ease.⁶

TABLE 5.1
COMPARISON OF GHANA'S MILITARY RESOURCES WITH SELECTED
BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES, 1966

Country	Population (m) 1965	Armed forces ('000) 1966/67	Armed forces/ population ratio	Defence expenditure (\$m) 1965/66	Defence as % of budget
Ghana	7.7	16.0	0.208	29.6	6.9
Cameroon	5.2	3.5	0.067	15.8	19.5
Ivory Coast	3.8	4.0	0.105	8.8	6.9
Kenya	9.4	4.2	0.045	11.3	5.5
Malawi	3.9	0.9	0.023	1.1	2.2
Mali	4.6	3.5	0.076	8.8	21.2
Nigeria	57.5	10.5	0.018	22.0	4.5
Tanzania	10.5	2.1	0.020	7.2	3.8
Uganda	7.6	5.7	0.075	6.9	5.2
Upper Volta	4.9	1.5	0.031	2.8	14.1
Zaire	15.6	32.0	0.205	22.5	14.5

Source: R. Luckham, The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-67 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.89.

In the preceding pages it was shown how considerations of prestige and the continental ambitions of the CPP leadership encouraged the enlargement and modernisation of Ghana's armed forces. But this course also had its dangers. Egypt's Free Officers' Movement had overthrown the monarchy in July 1952 and a rash of military takeovers occurred in 1958 when soldiers seized control in Burma, Iraq, Thailand and Pakistan.⁷ In November of the same year, General Ibrahim Abboud staged his coup in the Sudan.

In this chapter, the extent to which the army posed a threat to the civilian government of Kwame Nkrumah and the measures taken to neutralise the danger will be analysed. For one of the most important incidents in Ghana's early history concerned the arrest and court martial of an African officer, Captain Awhaitey. Subsequently, a commission of enquiry was convened by the government. Both events centred upon an alleged anti-Nkrumah conspiracy supposedly involving prominent Ga and Ewe leaders who had merged with other opposition groups in 1957 to form the United Party. The relationship between the CPP politicians and the black officers had never been close, but the discovery of linkages between soldiers and members of the Opposition was the first indication of future antipathy between civilian leaders and the military elite.

One result of the Awhaitey affair was to convince the prime minister that the best way to prevent a coup was to delay Africanisation and continue to rely on British officers in the important command posts. The government calculated that it would be safer (as well as for reasons of efficiency and discipline) to keep the armed forces under expatriate command. As Nkrumah explained after his overthrow:

The individual loyalties of such officers and their training, combined with the political complications for Britain which would have resulted in their joining a revolt, would have made it unlikely that a military takeover could take place.⁸

Yet although the Awhaitey case acted as a temporary check on the pace of officer indigenisation, CPP attitudes towards the army became increasingly susceptible to other, conflicting, pressures. The localisation of the military establishment between 1959 and 1961 cannot be fully understood without further reference to Nkrumah's growing preoccupation with the struggle for African liberation and unity. As will be seen, the government's pan-African ambitions and Ghana's determination to strike an independent posture conflicted with the existence of a national army dominated by foreigners. It was not long, therefore, before the pressure for speedier Ghanaianisation was resumed.

The crucial factor in the abandonment of the gradualist approach to military Africanisation was the conflict in the Congo, where the Ghana Army experienced serious casualties in one battalion and a full-scale revolt in another. The process evolved through three stages. Initially, the localisation programme was accelerated so that most of the major appointments in the Ghanaian United Nations (UN) contingent might be transferred to Africans.

Then the policy was widened to include the majority of middle and junior commands. Next—in September 1961—came the dismissal of General Alexander and his entire staff of British officers. This action occurred despite Nkrumah's fears about the loyalty of an all-black army and only eight months after the Tshiakiapa rebellion in which troops of the Third Battalion mutinied against their Ghanaian officers. In the affray, the inexperienced African CO, Lt.-Colonel Hansen, was beaten almost to death.

This chapter will describe, then, how the twin policies of limited localisation and the maintenance of strong military links with Britain, which had been two of the most noticeable features of continuity during the period of transition until 1959, eventually came into collision with Nkrumah's foreign policy plans. It will be argued that the contrasting attitudes about the army's role, which developed between white officers and the CPP leadership, symbolised the central military dilemma facing the prime minister after the transfer of political sovereignty: the need to balance internal security requirements and the government's instinct for self-preservation while at the same time accommodating radical international objectives and the demands for increased officer Africanisation which these entailed.

There was no simple solution to the problem but the end result was victory for the latter set of imperatives over the former. While there were good political reasons for this outcome, its automatic consequence was an African officer corps which was seriously deficient in experience at all levels of command. Before looking at the factors bearing on Ghana's intervention in the Congo, however, we shall begin by investigating the circumstances surrounding the army plot, for the two issues should be examined separately in any attempt to evaluate the military-political pressures confronting Nkrumah as leader of an independent state.

Captain Awhaitey and the Commission of Enquiry

On 22 January 1959, Captain (acting Major) Benjamin Awhaitey, the only Ghanaian officer with an independent command as camp commandant, army HQ, was dismissed from the service and imprisoned. He had been found guilty of taking part in subversive conversations with opposition MPs. The charge accused him of failing to report, until after he had learned that the matter had already been disclosed by others, that he had information of a proposed *coup d'état* which involved, *inter alia*, the seizure of Nkrumah and other cabinet members by soldiers on 20 December 1958.⁹

In the subsequent Granville Sharp commission of enquiry convened by the government to investigate the incident, Sir Tsibu Darku and Mr Maurice Charles ended their Majority Report by stating that "Awhaitey, Mr Amponsah and Mr Apaloo were engaged in a conspiracy to assassinate the Prime Minister . . ." ¹⁰ But in his Minority Report, the chairman of the commission, Mr Justice Granville Sharp, concluded that there had existed no such plot nor were "NCOs at any time approached by Mr Amponsah or Mr Apaloo for any unlawful reason."¹¹ However, the commission was unanimous in its

view that Amponsah and Apaloo had been engaged since June 1958 "in a conspiracy to carry out at some future date in Ghana an act for unlawful purpose, revolutionary in character."¹²

Of the five officers who assembled to try him, three were Ghanaian. They were all substantive captains and they were all destined for high command. Two, Ocran and Kotoka, were principals in the coup which was to take place seven years later. The third, Barwah, was killed in the same revolt whilst serving as acting CDS. All this was in the future, but it is relevant at this stage in that the trial's disclosures were in a sense premonitory of events to come in February 1966.

While the evidence in this *cause célèbre* is still in a number of respects inconclusive, it seems that some opposition MPs had deliberately fostered relationships with military personnel for political ends. On the basis of the million word verbatim report of the proceedings and of author interviews with several witnesses who testified,¹³ there can be little doubt that a conspiracy existed. But whether or not the plot would have blossomed to fruition in an actual assassination attempt one will never know. Nevertheless, certain facts were established and allegations made which are worth considering in more detail here.

Mr R.R. Amponsah, general secretary of the combined opposition parties, and Mr M.K. Apaloo, a Togoland Congress leader and an executive member of the United Party, were the two principal civilian figures in an affair which came to the notice of the military and police authorities through a Lieutenant E.R. Amenyah. (Rumours of an army *coup d'état* had been picked up by Special Branch several weeks earlier, but though a thorough investigation was instigated by Paley nothing whatever had been discovered). Amenyah, who had been commissioned into the army as a full lieutenant in January 1958, later rising to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, was then Officer in charge (i/c) Records, Ghana Army. He claimed that Awhaitey had asked him to recruit some senior NCOs to help assassinate Nkrumah at the airport on 20 December 1958 and then stage a coup. That Amenyah had at one time been a CPP member (although he committed perjury at the enquiry by disclaiming this) and may have been encouraged to distort his evidence in order to discredit the Opposition, does not detract from the fact that Amponsah and Apaloo had taken special interest in military matters and had both made a number of speeches in the National Assembly complaining about the conditions of service of African army personnel.

Apaloo was known to be very friendly with several Ghanaian officers. For instance, he had fagged for Major Stephen Otu at Achimota School, he had attended Captain Tevie's wedding and he was a close friend of Major Michel. Awhaitey and Amponsah had known each other for twenty-five years and had at one time taught at the same school together. Both politicians had also cultivated contacts with a number of senior NCOs. The commission of enquiry found no proof of rank-and-file complicity in a plot, but it was revealed that certain named NCOs entertained sufficient grievances as to make them potentially susceptible to the advances of opposition MPs.

At the enquiry, it emerged that Sergeant David Gardesey and Staff Sergeant A.K. Yovonoo (both Ewes) had written a number of letters to Mr Apaloo (also an Ewe) complaining about army conditions and pay. The soldiers' evidence clearly demonstrated their discontent with military life. They claimed, for example, that African Other Ranks were shabbily treated as compared to their white colleagues.¹⁴ Yovonoo's disgruntlement was particularly perceptible. He had attempted to obtain a commission in 1956, but had failed to make the grade. This, he claimed, was the result of unfair treatment.¹⁵

It was also established that Awhaitey and Apaloo had entertained NCOs and warrant officers to drinks in their homes and, according to Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM) Kramo Wangara, one of those involved, Apaloo had provided the soldiers with "a gift of money for distribution among them."¹⁶

Probably the most persuasive evidence of the existence of a plot was the disclosure that Amponsah, posing under the pseudonym "John Walker," had purchased from *Badges and Equipment* of the Strand in London, in June and July 1958, what at first glance appear to be relatively harmless pieces of military accoutrement: twenty-four Sam Browne belts, fifty swagger canes and hackles—plumes then worn in the tropical headgear of Ghanaian officers. Furthermore, it was established that Amponsah had ordered 240 bronze pips, as worn by army subalterns and captains. Neither Amponsah nor Apaloo was able to provide a convincing explanation of why this equipment had been acquired.

By themselves, such articles hardly seem to constitute the most appropriate stock-in-trade for aspiring coup-makers; but when examined in the light of an event that occurred in Burma the possibility of a serious plot assumes more credible proportions. In 1946, several Burmese MPs dressed themselves and a number of NCOs to look like officers and massacred fourteen cabinet ministers in an abortive but bloody coup. The event is of interest because Burma was the country outside Ghana best known to the army; and Awhaitey himself had served there as a soldier in the Gold Coast Regiment of the 82nd (West African) Division from 1943–1946.

The "Labadi T-junction affair," as the Awhaitey episode was known locally,¹⁷ should be examined against the contemporary political backdrop of mounting tensions and mutual suspicions between the CPP leadership and the United Party politicians. The 1956 election had confirmed the dominance of the CPP with seventy-one of the 104 National Assembly seats and 57 percent of the vote cast. In fact, the CPP victory virtually mirrored the 1954 result when it won seventy-two seats and 55.4 percent of the vote.¹⁸

But after Independence, Nkrumah's nationalist party increased and consolidated its power through a number of legal and parliamentary moves which culminated in the 1960 republican constitution and Dr Nkrumah's assumption of the presidency for life in 1962. During the same period, opposition groups attempted to exploit every outbreak of discontent with CPP rule. In one observer's view, such a policy was doomed to failure "for

the simple reason that the ruling party was far better placed and armed for an all-out struggle between the two sides."¹⁹ Much of the opposition came from the Ga community of Accra—and Awhaitey was a Ga—which had become increasingly embittered about the government's allocation of public funds. As will be shown in Chapter 7, Nkrumah never really trusted Gas after 1958, a factor that was to have adverse repercussions on the promotional prospects of Ga officers in the early 1960s.

Nkrumah moved against the Opposition with a series of measures which were designed to deprive them of their support in the regions (the December 1957 Avoidance of Discrimination Act forbade the existence of parties on a regional, tribal or religious basis, and a carefully orchestrated attack was launched on pro-opposition chiefs); by measure taken to increase CPP power in the regions (regional commissioners were appointed from the ranks of the party and were thus in a position to distribute or withhold patronage); by actions taken to centralise the authority of the government, involving changes in the 1957 Constitution (the regional assemblies were abolished by the March 1959 Constitution Amendment Act) and by the introduction of repressive acts that were designed to curtail the activities of opposition members (the August 1957 Deportation Act, the Emergency Powers Act of December 1957 and the July 1958 Preventive Detention Act, the latter of which gave the administration the power to detain individuals for five years for activities considered to be prejudicial to the state's security. There was no right of appeal).²⁰

Faced with a political situation in which the CPP was relentlessly increasing its power at the expense of other parties and where the prospects of displacing the government by constitutional methods were diminishing rapidly, it seems perfectly feasible, and indeed quite likely, that some MPs toyed with the idea of using dissatisfied elements of the security forces to redress their grievances. Such an approach would certainly have been considered more appropriate after the arrest and detention of thirty-eight members of the Opposition in November 1958 and following Amponsah's clash with the CPP two months earlier.²¹ Certainly—although some mystery still shrouds the affair—the government was convinced that there was a close connection between the Awhaitey conspiracy and the defeat at the polls of the United Party politicians in the regional, municipal and local elections of 1958.²² The affair created in the minds of the ruling party the firm belief that the UP would condone, and perhaps actively support, any illegal means of overthrowing the government. This conviction played a definitive role in governing Nkrumah's attitude to the army, especially where it concerned the question of retaining expatriate officers in the key commands.

Army Reaction to the Conspiracy

The court martial and the publicity it generated led Major-General Paley to issue a directive to his subordinates regarding the delineation of spheres of relative autonomy between civil and military institutions. In a message

which was also obviously meant for CPP consumption, he stressed that the army should not be used by "irresponsible politicians," whatever their party, as a means of promoting or crushing political opposition. He also emphasised that since the primary role of the army was in domestic security, it had to be carefully educated on the legitimate use of force and "on the extreme undesirability of being mixed in politics."²³

Immediately before leaving Ghana in 1960, Paley produced a second directive in which he claimed that the government was determined to keep the administration of the military as an independent organisation free from any political interference. This being the case, he explained that

It is the duty of each and every soldier, sailor and airman to give unwavering loyalty to the state of Ghana . . . members of the defence forces may be good and honest, but as a rule they are not suitably qualified to run a government.²⁴

The CDS also included in his message a summary of a report he had been asked by Nkrumah to write on the causes of armed intervention. Paley had replied that the major reasons for coups were political interference with and favouritism for appointments, promotions and postings of military personnel; politicians swindling over rations and equipment and a corrupt and inefficient civil administration. By this time, there had already been cases of CPP ministers "borrowing" army furniture and provisions (an unpleasantness Alexander had to deal with too) and signs of improbity by CPP officials in other areas. On the other hand, with the notable exception of the appointment of Africans to the battalion commands, no attempt had been made to interfere with the internal day to day administration of the armed forces. Despite the warning implicit in Paley's report and Nkrumah's promise not to meddle in the army's internal affairs, this *modus operandi* was to last only a few more months.

While the Awhaitey case may be seen as portentous of the breakdown in the inherited civil-military format, there were several reasons why it failed to precipitate a crisis of confidence between the army and the government. First of all, the army as a whole was not implicated in the plot; there was never any suggestion of an organised plan by Ghanaian officers to seize power. Indeed, the black officers reacted by adopting an outward stance of strict political neutrality, suitably wary, with Awhaitey's fate in mind, of the dangers in voicing political opinions.²⁵

Secondly, few officers felt that Awhaitey had been punished unfairly. Most officers interviewed by this writer, including several who were instrumental in the 1966 coup,²⁶ believed that the captain had been party to an illegal conspiracy and that this constituted unprofessional behaviour at that time. Such an impression was probably strengthened by the fact that the Ghanaian officers, who numbered only fifty-nine in December 1958, were considerably outnumbered by expatriate officers who had no hesitation in condemning Awhaitey's conduct. So soon after Independence, one might expect the views of the commissioned Africans—many of whom had served

for a substantial period in the colonial army and who were therefore well-indoctrinated with the Western ethos of military subordination to the civilian authority—to reflect those of their British officer models.²⁷

In the third place, the trial coincided with Nkrumah's plans to enlarge the security forces, a policy which has seldom caused misgivings on the part of military men. The decision to re-equip and expand the army enhanced the self-image of the black officers. It also provided new opportunities for specialisation and promotions as well as a chance to transfer to the navy or air force which were then in the process of being formed. With the improvements in pay and conditions noted in the next chapter, the native officer could look forward to a rewarding career in which his material conditions equalled, and in some respects exceeded, those of his civilian counterparts who had entered the civil service. Put more bluntly, in contrast to the political counter-elite in the ranks of the Opposition, the Ghanaian army officers were doing rather well under CPP rule.

Lastly—and most important here—the army had not yet experienced the traumas associated with the Congo operations and Nkrumah had no plans for expelling his white officers. In fact, as was noted earlier, the whole episode strengthened rather than weakened the administration's resolve to retain the services of expatriates in the military command. This point was also clearly understood in Britain where one observer wrote:

It is an immense advantage for Dr Nkrumah to have loyal British officers in key positions throughout the army. . . . As a result he can feel confident that the instruments of State will not be turned against him. This in turn enables the Government to take risks which it would never feel free to do if potentially unreliable Africans held the key posts.²⁸

But a year after these words were printed, Nkrumah took one of the biggest gambles in his career when he committed his troops to the Congo. This action had two lasting consequences: it diminished, rather than enhanced, Ghana's influence in Africa and—of special interest for the purposes of this study—it had severe repercussions on the discipline and organisational cohesion of the armed forces.

The Congo: 1960–1963

The British CDS and his senior staff emphasised the assumption that the army's overriding task was to ensure internal security. All their military planning was based on this supposition. For some time after Independence, Nkrumah was willing to continue this arrangement because he believed it permitted an expansion of his armed forces without a fall in standards. He also felt more secure with expatriate officers in control. Such a view was reinforced after the Awhaitey affair and the 1958 coups elsewhere in the Third World. However, this prescription for inhibiting military excursions into domestic politics did not at the same time make for an effective pursuit

of Nkrumah's external policy. Ghana's intervention in the Congo proved this conclusively.²⁹

On 30 June 1960, the former Belgian Congo became independent. A few days later, the *Force Publique* mutinied and on 10 July Belgian paratroops intervened in the rich mining province of Katanga, ostensibly to protect Belgian citizens. At the same time, Moïse Tshombe's Conakrat Party announced the secession of Katanga. President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba responded to this threat by requesting military assistance from the United Nations. The same day, on 15 July, Major-General Alexander flew into Léopoldville with a platoon of soldiers following Vice-Premier Gizenga's request for interim Ghanaian aid until UN troops arrived.

Within a week, 1,193 Ghanaian soldiers were in Léopoldville and 192 more were waiting for transport in Accra with 156 trucks and 160 tons of stores. In terms of its resources, Ghana made one of the heaviest manpower contributions to the Congo. By the end of August 1960, she had 2,394 army officers and men in the country. The Ghana contingent remained for three of the four years of the UN operations, contributing a total of more than 39,000 man-months. During this period, approximately one third of the army—and a much larger proportion of its combat troops—was in the Congo at any one time. This meant that precautions had to be taken to ensure that as many home-based soldiers as possible could be used in the event of internal upheavals in Ghana.³⁰ Only two other African states, Nigeria and Ethiopia, provided more man-months than Ghana, but none of the contributing states sent as high a proportion of its armed forces.³¹

The normal tour of duty was six months. By 1963, three of Ghana's five battalions (the Sixth was not established until 1964) had completed two tours of duty and some officers and soldiers, Kotoka for instance, had done three. A small unit from the Ghana Police was also sent out at the start of the operations to cooperate with the local Congolese gendarmerie; but due to the growing local unpopularity of Ghana the contingent was returned to Accra in January 1961, by which time it had become obvious that it was no longer in a position to serve a useful purpose.

On 8 August 1960, a secret Ghana-Congo agreement for union was signed. The event was important because Nkrumah envisaged it as the first tangible result of his grand strategy for Africa which would bring about the continental unity he had long sought.³² He believed that assistance to Lumumba was crucial in the fight against outside powers. To Nkrumah, the Congo episode was evidence, *par excellence*, of neo-colonialist determination to exploit the rivalries and fragilities of newly independent states.

Nkrumah tended to see the Congo as an opportunity to exercise leadership which would win attention throughout the continent for himself and Ghana. There were high stakes for him in the crisis and he was determined to seize the opportunity in order to demonstrate international statesmanship as a mediator. It was to defend Lumumba's government that Nkrumah sent army and police units into the Congo; but once they fell under UN command, it became more and more clear that his forces were being used not to defend but to displace Lumumba.

Very soon, the Ghanaian force found itself under verbal fire from almost every conceivable quarter. On the one hand, it was criticised by Lumumba for having betrayed him (in September 1960, a Ghanaian company was ordered to block Lumumba's entry to the Léopoldville radio station which had been closed by the UN); on the other hand, Kasavubu, angered by Nkrumah's special relationship with Lumumba, accused the Ghanaian forces of supporting Lumumba to the detriment of the central government. The United Nations found it increasingly difficult to protect Ghana's units from injurious accusations that they were collaborating with Nkrumah's special diplomatic emissaries in Léopoldville, Andrew Djin and Nathaniel Welbeck. They appeared to be incapable of appreciating that troops placed under UN command cannot take orders from their parent country.³³ The conduct of Congolese politicians, and the political manoeuvres of Nkrumah and his ambassadors, lowered the respect of many officers for politicians in general and for the CPP leadership in particular. It was from about this time that the African officers began to take a closer interest in Ghanaian political events. Some returned home entertaining ideas of a coup.³⁴

Eventually, General van Horn, the UN military commander, decided to move the Ghanaians to another part of the country. So in January 1961, having completed six months service in Léopoldville, the Ghana contingent transferred to Luluabourg, capital of Kasai province, which had declared itself independent under the self-styled "King" Kalonji. Kasai, as will be discussed shortly, was the scene of the army's most serious reverse in the shape of the Third Battalion mutiny.

It was in the Congo that the contradictions of Ghana's prescription for internal security and Nkrumah's policy of non-alignment came into conflict. When the first Ghanaian troops arrived in Léopoldville in mid-1960, the army was officered mainly by whites, a state of affairs which made Nkrumah acutely susceptible to the taunts of radical countries such as Guinea and Egypt. Although the president placed considerable value on the British officers as a stabilising influence in his army, the prominence of expatriates embarrassed him as it clashed with his projection of Ghana as a progressive independent state. "For political reasons," said one British officer who served in the Congo as a company commander, "the government wanted the army to be as black as possible."³⁵ Nkrumah's discomfort was not isolated since it was a sentiment shared by his own soldiers:

The Congolese and the other African troops . . . were always pointing fingers at the white officers in the Ghana Army and wanting us to explain their presence in the ranks of the Ghana Forces, whilst the Congolese were being urged by Nkrumah to sack their Belgian officers; for they could hardly reconcile the presence of British officers in our Forces with his advice. I may say this often caused us some embarrassment.³⁶

To counteract this problem, and in order to drive home his country's credibility, Nkrumah personally promoted his three most senior African officers on 30 July 1960 and sent them to the Congo. Michel and S.J.A.

Otu were appointed temporary brigadiers, the former as brigade commander and Otu as the senior liaison officer. Lt.-Colonel Ankrah, the First Battalion commander, was made temporary colonel. The promotions and appointments were gazetted without consulting Alexander, "the sort of cross," he recorded, "you have to bear if you serve under these conditions."³⁷

Once again, as in 1959 and early 1960, when the infantry battalions were placed under African officers, the normal criteria for advancement through the army hierarchy—seniority, aptitude and experience—were brushed aside in favour of other considerations. It was a forewarning of an equally abrupt and much more extensive action fourteen months later when the entire officer corps was Ghanaianised.

Operations in Kasai

The first major manifestation of the dangers inherent in promoting officers to posts for which they lacked the relevant experience, authority and self-assurance was the revolt at Tshiakiapa in South Kasai.³⁸ On 19 January 1961, the Third Infantry Battalion mutinied. The unit was under the command of a thirty-seven year old Ga, Lieutenant-Colonel David Hansen, who had been appointed when Otu relinquished the post six months previously. He had been an officer for just under seven years.

Trouble began when Hansen, described by one British officer attached to the Third Battalion as "indecisive and superficial," gathered his WOs and senior NCOs together to explain that, before the battalion returned to Ghana, the wives and property of all the men would probably be moved from their home base at Giffard Camp, Accra, to the Northern Region capital of Tamale. News of the proposed transfer was greeted with great hostility by the soldiers who made it clear that their subordinates would also regard the matter unfavourably.

Anger increased when rumours spread that the troops' furniture, household utensils and bicycles were to be auctioned off before the move because of transport shortages and because the soldiers' possessions could not be fitted into the dilapidated barracks at Tamale. Many of the men were already disgruntled since there had been problems about sending pay to their wives.³⁹

At 7 p.m. the same day, Hansen was informed that 200 or so soldiers had congregated at the base airfield and were heading towards the barracks in a state of mutiny, firing their weapons in the air. Unable to pacify the mob, Hansen was clubbed with rifle butts and left for dead. Subsequently, an ugly facial scar left little doubt as to the almost fatal seriousness of his wounds at the hands of his own soldiers. The mutineers then ran amok, attacking the orderly room, breaking into the quartermaster's stores to remove arms and ammunition and ransacking the officers' mess to steal liquor. It was not until the following morning, when Major Burns, Hansen's British second-in-command, persuaded the soldiers to return to the airfield and await the arrival of Brigadier Michel (whom the officers had managed

to contact on the one radio which survived the chaos), that order was restored.

A few days later, the entire battalion was flown back to Accra where most of the ninety known most dangerous men were court-martialed and severely punished. The Third Battalion was formally disbanded, its remaining officers and men being absorbed into the First, Second and Fourth Battalions. The Fourth was formed—under a British CO, Lt.-Colonel Douglas Cairns—from the one company of the Third not involved in the mutiny. The Third Battalion was not reconstituted again until 1963.

There can be little doubt that Hansen's inexperience in conditions which would have taxed even a seasoned battalion commander, as well as his apparent immoderation in applying discipline, contributed in large measure to the mutiny. Not only was Hansen inexperienced but, according to British officers who served in Ghana's Congo force, he was also an officer of low calibre. To compound matters, by early 1961 most of Hansen's subordinate officers were recently promoted Ghanaians with relatively little service. This was the result of Nkrumah's determination to have as many blacks in his Congo force as was possible. In the view of one British officer already quoted, these men "were desperately short of experience." Most of them were lieutenants who had been commissioned since 1959. From all reports, they tended to treat their men badly.

Earlier in this study, the ethnic/regional contrast between officers and ranks was examined in some detail. Between the Muslim rank-and-file of the backward hinterland and the educated Christian officers, drawn from the southern coastal areas, there could be little community of interest. Indeed, General Alexander opined that the African soldier was less attached to his Ghanaian officer than he was to his British one and that the reason for this was that the European officer cared more for his welfare.⁴⁰ This conclusion was reinforced by one northerner in his early twenties who served in the Congo as a soldier: "White officers should have remained in control. They respected us and treated us fairly. . . . Our black officers were not able to get a grip on the soldiers. They were not respected."⁴¹

Although the Ghanaian Army was not the only one in the Congo to suffer from disciplinary problems—there was also, for instance, a significant deterioration of discipline in the Nigerian contingent⁴²—the Third Battalion mutiny was the worst example of organisational disintegration in the units under UN command.

The Ghanaians were also the victims of the most serious atrocity committed by Congolese soldiers against UN forces. On 28 April 1961, in an horrific incident with members of the *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC) at Port Franqui, forty-three officers and ranks of the Second Battalion were brutally murdered. There was no discernible military motive for the massacre which involved crowding the victims into a room which was then sprayed with sub-machine gun fire. Those who survived the bullets (including a friend of this writer's family, Lieutenant Anthony Brown, who had just married and come out from England) were then attacked with machetes, their badly

mutilated bodies being thrown into the Kasai river. In the *mélée*, two Swedish company sergeant-majors (CSMs) managed to escape into the forest and report the gruesome event to the outside world.⁴³

A similar, but far less serious, incident occurred a few months later at a railway junction on the border of Lulua and Baluba country when a platoon sergeant and two privates were hacked to death whilst attempting to prevent Kalonjists from arresting a Lulua engine-driver and his fireman.⁴⁴

Both incidents—the mutiny and the massacre—can be largely attributed to the inexperience of Ghanaian officers who had been promoted and sent to the Congo. These mishaps, together with Nkrumah's growing disillusionment with events in the Congo following the withdrawal of the Casablanca countries, led to the removal (between June and November 1961) of Ghanaian troops. However, the Second Battalion returned to the Congo in February 1962 and a Ghanaian force remained there until September 1963, by which time the efforts of the UN had virtually ended the secessionist rebellion and Katanga was reabsorbed into the country.

For the soldiers, the catastrophies and humiliations suffered in the operations were partially mitigated by a number of solid achievements, by special allowances and by the steadfastness and courage exhibited on the part of many individuals in the face of dangerous odds.

On one occasion in November 1960, Alexander rescued Ghana's ambassador, Welbeck, from a house in Léopoldville at great risk to his own life. Two months earlier, Ankrah won the Ghana Military Cross for rescuing Lumumba from almost certain death at the hands of ANC troops.⁴⁵ And for his action in relieving the Fifth Battalion and opening a route from Kamina base to Kaminaville in August 1962, Lieutenant-Colonel Kotoka, commander of the Second Battalion, won the Distinguished Service Order.⁴⁶ Between July 1960 and July 1961, when the size of the Ghanaian UN contingent was at its peak, seventeen officers and twenty-six Other Ranks were mentioned in dispatches.⁴⁷ These figures include six expatriates and a certain Lieutenant I.K. Acheampong who was responsible for toppling the Second Republic of Kofi Busia in January 1972.

Nkrumah's Security Dilemma

During the first two years of Independence, the government's relationship with the military was generally amicable. Africanisation was proceeding at a reasonable rate and there was no evident dissatisfaction among politicians about retaining the services of Europeans in the army. Indeed, Nkrumah's policy was wholly pragmatic and the emergence of the army out of colonial tutelage saw a continuation of the caution which was operative prior to 1957. Preoccupied with acquainting itself with the duties of office and the consolidation of power, the CPP leadership initially left the internal administration of the armed forces to the British CDS and his staff who fostered the assumption that the Ghana Army's task was the same as that of the Gold Coast Military Forces: to maintain internal security. It was

primarily for service in the colonial Gold Coast that the army was organised, trained and equipped and the British did not believe that it should be used in the foreign policy sphere.

But Nkrumah's pan-African aspirations increasingly led to a review of the army's role. It also raised the question whether the presence of so many European officers was likely to do more harm than good. For Nkrumah, it was essential to have credible security forces if his country's voice was to carry any weight abroad. In this respect, the conspicuous presence of white army officers presented a dilemma. On the one hand, the prime minister was anxious to maintain standards—and the presence of seconded and contract expatriates ensured a high level of professionalism and combat efficiency. On the other hand, for political reasons, a non-African officered military—especially one led by citizens of the ex-metropolitan authority—would not be able to play a leading part in foreign affairs.

To these apparently irreconcilable considerations was added an extra complication. This involved the whole issue of Ghana's, but more especially the CPP administration's, security. At first, Nkrumah was perfectly happy with the plan whereby the British officers who commanded the army before March 1957 continued to do so after that date. One of the most important manifestations of this arrangement was the extension until 1960 of General Paley's appointment as CDS.⁴⁸ Chapter 4 was at pains to stress that the projected expansion and modernisation of the armed forces made the continued employment of Europeans essential if standards were to be maintained. This chapter has been additionally concerned with emphasising the insurance value Nkrumah placed on foreign officers as a bulwark against an army revolt. It is important, therefore, to view civil-military relations during this period against the wider political conditions prevailing at the time.

The struggle for power between the CPP and its political opponents, in which it was virtually impossible for the Opposition to win an election, made the loyalty of the army an important issue—especially given Nkrumah's doubts about the allegiance of his soldiers:

... if I was to have an army at all, I had to accept the framework bequeathed to me and an African officer corps which contained a high proportion of individuals who were either actively hostile to the CPP and myself and who were anti-socialist in outlook.⁴⁹

These sentiments were particularly strong following the evidence arising from the Awhaitey trial which demonstrated links between some Ghanaian officers and certain United Party politicians. It also revealed the existence of an anti-government plot. The enquiry additionally uncovered some evidence of dissatisfaction in the ranks.

Together with the fears generated by the spate of coups in 1958, the "Labadi T-junction affair" was sufficiently alarming for the army and the government to take action. Indoctrination on the non-political role of the armed forces became commonplace at military passing-out parades and Paley

seized every opportunity to impress the CPP leadership of the necessity for restraint in using the army to crush opposition. But the Awhaitey episode had wider repercussions. It demonstrated the potential danger posed by a standing force while at the same time providing Nkrumah with an opportunity to discredit the UP as intrinsically conspiratorial and disloyal. It was from this point forward that the CPP administration began to use the Preventive Detention Act on a widened scale.

Also important was the effect of these events on the process of officer localisation since they confirmed Nkrumah in the wisdom of delaying Africanisation—especially in the key command and staff posts—and retaining the services of trusted expatriates. As will be seen in the next chapter, one result of this hiccup in the smooth transition of commands from whites to blacks was a serious shortage in officer experience when the army was indigenised, virtually overnight, in 1961.

The significance attached to keeping British officers in command of the military might have continued for much longer had it not been for the Congo crisis. It was here that Nkrumah used his forces outside Ghana for the first time. It was here also that the final battles between the contradictions inherent in Nkrumah's ambivalent attitude toward his army were played out. On the one side were the pressures for caution and gradual Africanisation. Ranged against the arguments for moderation was Nkrumah's irresistible compulsion to play a dominant role in continental politics. But it was impossible to play a major politico-military part in African affairs when the army was commanded by a large number of highly visible whites. Thus, from an organisational and technical perspective, Ghana needed to maintain the British connection; politically, the objections to such an arrangement became insurmountable. There was no *via media* to the conflicting demands of Nkrumah's military policy; but when a choice had to be made, the president opted for the latter, radical, course of action. Ultimately, the issues associated with the Congo transcended the internal security issue. The means employed by the government to redress the security gap created by the expulsion of expatriate officers constitute the bulk of our investigations in Chapter 7.

Finally, it is important at this stage to point out that the Congo crisis was also responsible for unusually rapid mobility and a lack of continuity within the army, making it difficult for the development of stable patterns of control. The process occurred in two ways. Initially it resulted from the promotion of Africans up through the hierarchy in order to ensure a racial profile in the senior command that would be seen as compatible with Nkrumah's stance of non-alignment. It resulted, secondly, from posting as many black officers as was possible to fill the junior and middle positions in Ghana's UN contingent. To do this, it was frequently necessary to transfer Ghanaian officers from one battalion to another as successive units completed their tours of duty abroad. Most of these men were lieutenants or very junior captains who had been commissioned in or since 1959. Their experience was necessarily very limited.

In short, not only were there premature promotions of relatively inexperienced Ghanaians into the upper echelons, but there was also a high horizontal turnover from military posting to military posting at lower command levels.⁵⁰ And the lack of experience in the senior African command meant that the mass of newly appointed subalterns was not given the necessary support and guidance in the enforcement of proper standards of discipline. Neither, for that matter, was there sufficient time for the accretion of support among junior officers in the other direction for the authority of their commanders nor downwards again between the southern subalterns and the infantrymen from the North.

Moreover, the effective transfer of authority from Europeans to Africans was not made any easier by strain at the very highest level of civil-military relations—between the CDS and the CPP leadership—and by tensions between ranking Ghanaian officers and experienced expatriates junior to them. When all these considerations were compounded by the exigencies of the Congo operation, it is hardly surprising that discipline came under considerable strain.

The revolt at Tshiakiapa was a direct consequence of the failure to stabilise lines of authority during the period of accelerated transition from British to Ghanaian command after 1959; but neither the structural deficiencies of the military manifested in the mutiny, nor the potential threats to his domestic security, prevented Nkrumah from taking the stage one step further when the army was totally Africanised in September 1961. The manner in which this was done, and the serious repercussions it had, form the subject matter of the next chapter.

Notes

1. L.W. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in J.J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.69.

2. P.C. Lloyd (ed.), *The New Elites of Tropical Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.9.

3. See, for instance, W.F. Gutteridge, *Military Institutions and Power in New States* (London: Pall Mall, 1964), pp.141-144.

4. C.E. Welch, "Praetorianism in Commonwealth West Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, 2 (June 1972), p.206.

5. S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall, 1962), p.238.

6. For an analysis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of military organisations vis-à-vis civilian political institutions, see A.R. Luckham, "A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations," *Government and Opposition* 6, 1 (Winter 1971), pp.10-17.

7. When the Pakistan Constitution was abrogated by President Iskander Mirza and martial law imposed by General Ayub Kahn, who succeeded to the presidency in October 1958, Nkrumah decided not to send Ghanaian cadets to the country. Later, however, this decision was revoked and Ghana sent officers to the Quetta Staff College (as noted in Chapter 4).

8. K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p.37.

9. *Proceedings and Report of the Commission Appointed to enquire into the matters disclosed at the trial of Captain Benjamin Awhaitey before a court-martial and the surrounding circumstances* (Accra: Government Printer, 1959), Appendix B, p.ii.

10. *Ibid.*, p.495.

11. *Ibid.*, p.505.

12. *Ibid.*, p.482.

13. Victor Owusu, Major-General N.A. Aferi and Brigadier A.K. Kattah were interviewed on this matter on 4 May 1974, 15 February 1974 and 22 May 1975 respectively. Victor Owusu, one time CPP member and later one of the leaders of the Ashanti-based National Liberation Movement as MP for Agona Kwabre, was one of the witnesses (together with other opposition figures including Kofi Busia, Joe Appiah and Simon Dombo) at the enquiry. Owusu was later Attorney-General in the NLC and Minister of Justice and Attorney-General in the Busia government. At the time of the enquiry, Aferi was a captain (temporary major) and Kattah was a lieutenant.

A number of other officers—Majors S.J.A. Otu and Michel, Captains Quaye, Slater, Tevie and Yarboi and Lieutenants Addo and Dedjoe—were also called as witnesses, thus ensuring that a large proportion of the Ghanaian officer corps was involved in the affair in one way or another.

14. *Proceedings and Report of the Commission*, p.436. At that time, white officers were outnumbered by white NCOs and WOs, most of whom were employed in technical duties. There was a large difference in pay and privileges between British soldiers and their Ghanaian counterparts, mainly due to the substantial overseas allowances paid to expatriates. This was a source of tension.

15. *Ibid.*, p.432. Yovonoo's allegation was in no way substantiated. Later, when standards were lowered in order to obtain enough officers for the expanding army, he was commissioned (in November 1961), rising to the rank of major by 1971.

16. *Ibid.*, pp.414, 455. The other named soldiers entertained by the politicians were Company Sergeant-Majors (CSMs) Bale Baz, Tomina Kardo, Musa Zabrama and Kussasi.

17. The Labadi Road T-junction, near a track leading to the beach, was used by several of the accused as a meeting place on 19 December 1958.

18. The background to the election and a detailed analysis of the issues and personalities involved are provided in D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), Chapter V (1954 election) and Chapter VII (1956 election).

19. *Ibid.*, p.371.

20. Nkrumah explained the introduction of these harsh legal and administrative measures as essential if the unity of an emergent Ghana was to be preserved: "Even a system based on social justice and a democratic constitution may need backing during the period following independence by emergency measures of a totalitarian kind." K. Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Nelson, 1959), p.x.

21. In September 1958, Amponsah was charged with sedition for accusing senior police officers of aiding the government in the printing of false ballot papers for the forthcoming regional assembly elections. He was acquitted on a technicality, but this made little difference since he and Apaloo were detained three months later for planning to stage a coup.

22. See *Statement by the Government on the Recent Conspiracy, December 1961* (Accra: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1962), p.10.

23. Quoted from A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), p.2.

24. *Ibid.*, p.3.

25. As one officer, who later became army commander, remarked: "We know we should not be mixing in politics. This is part of our tradition and training. But although it was difficult not to be interested when so much was happening, after Awhaitey left we saw the problems of becoming involved. Most of us did not talk about politics." Interview, Major-General D.C.K. Amenu, 30 April 1974.

26. Major-General D.C.K. Amenu, 30 April 1974; Brigadier A.K. Kattah, 22 May 1975; Brigadier D.A. Asare, 22 April 1974. The officers interviewed were quick to point out that the 1966 coup should not be judged in the same way since by the mid-1960s the army was the only institution in a position to overthrow Nkrumah's "corrupt and illegal dictatorship."

27. For an interesting discussion on this question of role emulation, see R.M. Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference-Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case," *World Politics* 23,3 (April 1971), pp.399-430.

28. P. Worsthorpe, "Trouble in the Air: Letter from Ghana," *Encounter*, May 1957, p.7.

29. Except for those issues and events affecting Ghana's civil-military relations, it is not the intention to recount the background and politics of the Congo episode in any detail here. An extensive library on the subject exists which includes P. Lumumba, *Congo My Country* (London: Pall Mall, 1962); R.C. Good, "The Congo Crisis: A Study of Postcolonial Politics," in L.W. Martin (ed.), *Neutralism and Nonalignment* (New York: Praeger, 1962); C. Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonisation and Independence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); C. Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); and A.H. House, *The U.N. in the Congo* (New York: University Press of America, 1978).

30. During the Congo operations, soldiers in certain static units in Ghana such as stores, workshops and pay and record offices were given special internal security training. One directive from the Ministry of Defence to the Pay Service read as follows: "Despite the purely technical nature of the Forces Pay Office, Weapon Training and Physical Training must be actively pursued to keep the officers and men in trim for any internal security duties that arise as did in August 1962 following the Kulungugu Bomb incident and the wave of bomb throwing that gripped the capital." Undated letter attached to *Pay-Master General and Comptroller's Department Files* (Accra: Ministry of Defence, October 1962).

31. E.W. Lefever, *Uncertain Mandate: Politics of the U.N. Congo Operation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), p.158.

32. Part of the document reveals that the union would be jointly responsible for "(a) Foreign Affairs (b) Defence (c) The issue of a common currency (d) Economic Planning and Development." *Secret Agreement Between Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah* (Accra: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 August 1960). The agreement is reproduced in full in K. Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo* (London: Heinemann, 1964), p.31. For a more detailed analysis of Nkrumah's interest in African unity, see W. Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), *passim*.

33. According to the British CDS, who made clear his distaste for Ghana's extensive involvement in the crisis, "The stream of instructions which Nkrumah sent from Accra, both to his army and to Djin, annoyed the United Nations

headquarters." H.T. Alexander, *African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (London: Pall Mall, 1965), p.50.

34. "I felt most disgusted with the whole operation, and ashamed. . . . The fault was that of our politicians at home who had placed us under the command of the United Nations, and at the same time taken active and sinister sides in the whole affair." A.A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p.66. It is also interesting to note that among the grievances listed by the army coup-makers of 1966 in their propaganda justifying the revolt was the complaint that it was planned to use the army again outside Ghana (in Rhodesia).

35. Because of an undertaking given by the author, the identity of this source is not disclosed here.

36. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken*, pp.6-7.

37. Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p.45.

38. Apart from the British and Ghanaian officers interviewed, the main data on the Third Battalion mutiny is from Alexander, *African Tightrope*, pp.67-71. The main British source, a senior serving officer in the British Army, requested to remain anonymous.

39. The majority of Other Ranks were Muslims with two or three wives. The difficulty for the Ministry of Defence, therefore, was which of the wives to pay. Eventually, a system of photographing the "official" wife was introduced but this caused "terrific ferment." Interview, Colonel R.E.A. Kotei, 9 April 1974. According to Kotei, some of the troops were also worried that, during their absence in the Congo, their womenfolk were being "looked after" by other soldiers at home.

40. Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p.21. But tensions had been building up for several months. Later in his book (p.68), Alexander also apportions blame for the event on overwork, the isolation of the base, lack of support and leadership from UN Headquarters, the "atmosphere of mutiny, murder and rape in which the soldiers had to live" and easy accessibility to wine, women and hemp.

41. Interview, Major S.J. Braimah, 22 January 1979. In 1922, Lord Lugard, creator of the RWAFF, believed that mutinies among African troops "may generally be ascribed to lack of touch and ignorance of causes of discontent." F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), p.577.

42. N.J. Miners, *The Nigerian Army 1956-1966* (London: Methuen, 1971), pp.78-81.

43. Details from conversations with Lieutenant Brown's family and interviews with Colonels L.K. Kwaku (5 August 1975), J.M. Ewa (13 February 1974) and J.P.K. Mensah-Brown (29 July 1975).

44. The relationship between the Ghanaian soldiers and the Kalonjists has been described by Sergeant Fred Acquah: "One issue which developed ill-feeling between us (in the 2 Bn) and the Kalonjists at Bawkwanga was tribal marks. The Kalonjists were mainly of the Baluba tribe, and their tribal 'enemy' the Lulus, bore the same marks as us. One day a Ghanaian soldier with these tribal marks was seized upon by the Kalonjists who insisted that his mark was that of a Lulus, and therefore must necessarily be a 'spy.' All efforts to establish friendly relations and to explain to them the similarity failed." *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1,1 (February 1967), p.15.

45. Part of the citation read as follows: "Colonel Ankrah with complete disregard to his own life disarmed an ANC soldier who with a loaded Sten machine carbine attempted to shoot Mr Lumumba. He carried the Prime Minister in safety to his residence in his vehicle which was fired upon by ANC ambushers. Had it not been for the quick and bold action of Colonel Ankrah at the risk of his own life, Mr

Lumumba's life would have been taken with untold consequences at the time." *Ghana Gazette*, 6 January 1961, pp.6-7.

46. L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General E.K. Kotoka* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1972), p.46.

47. *Ghana Gazette*, 30 June 1961, pp.453-454.

48. A large number of the most senior officers also stayed on. Thus, of the twenty-two British officers in the rank of major and above at Christmas 1955, thirteen were still serving in Ghana at the end of 1957. *The Army Lists 1955-58* (London: HMSO, 1955-1958). Continuity with the past was also symbolised by the palm tree insignia of the RWAFF which became the Ghana Army's emblem.

49. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p.38. On the same page, the author continues: "Worse still, the fact that the bulk of the infantry came from the North, where education had been almost completely neglected in colonial times, made many of the rank and file soldiers easy prey to anyone who wished to mislead them."

50. As will be detailed in Chapter 8, one result of this was the existence of peer groups stretching right across the army, thereby providing an effective network for common political action in the 1966 coup.

6

Completing Africanisation: The Institutionalisation of Instability

Like others who were prepared to believe that the transfer of Western political institutions to Africa could be effected with relative ease, many Europeans saw few difficulties in stamping the organisational and behavioural norms of metropolitan armies on their fledgling colonial counterparts. As noted in previous chapters, the Ghana Army at the time of Independence bore a close resemblance to the British Army, a picture that was emphasised by the retention and overwhelming domination of expatriate whites in the officer corps and senior Other Ranks.

But as one scholar has written, however great the emulation of the British military format, the consequences for the behaviour of the institution and its officer corps cannot be inferred from the model that has been copied. For when the organisational patterns of European armies are transplanted to transitional societies, they may undergo transformations that seriously alter the conduct of the institution and its members.¹

Yet it should also be recognised that whilst Ghana witnessed a gradual modification of its armed forces away from the British pattern, particularly from the end of 1961 when Nkrumah dismissed his white officers, the changes were not so great as to require a rejection in the present analysis of the formal organisational model. Indeed as Luckham has argued in his study of the Nigerian Army, even in states that have been severely threatened by internal disorders and civil war, the military may still be seen as having a structure, pattern and vitality of its own.²

In this chapter, then, the primary intention is to examine the institutional changes caused by Africanisation—particularly those following after Ghana's intervention in the Congo. The focus here is on two main areas of enquiry. In the first place, we are concerned with questions associated with the recruitment of educated Africans into the army. How was the army able to accommodate the mass exodus of European officers in 1961? What were the sources of cadet recruits at this time? And in what way were these issues related to those ones examined in Chapter 3 concerning the local

image of the military forces and alternative job opportunities? It will be shown that the army was, in fact, able to overcome the historic hostility shown to itself, becoming a popular profession for ambitious secondary school (and some university) graduates in the early 1960s. The substantial rise in the number of black officers commissioned after 1960 was also the result of further changes in government policy.

On the other hand, the rapid induction into the officer corps of young Ghanaians caused major difficulties which were to have lasting consequences on the army's internal stability. Thus, it is with the second set of issues—those dealing with the organisational strains imposed on the army by accelerated indigenisation—that we are at greatest pains to amplify. For instance, what was the impact of the replacement of expatriates with Africans on the promotional prospects of the latter? Given the requirement for large numbers of new officers, was it possible to preserve adequate age/experience margins between different levels of the officer hierarchy and, if not, what consequences relating to patterns of authority and discipline flowed from such discrepancies? In this respect, we are interested in describing changes in the relationship between officers and Other Ranks as well as examining the implications of indigenisation on the professional competence of the total military establishment.

By choosing a precipitous policy of localisation, Nkrumah and his party made a conscious political decision to accept a certain level of inefficiency, a point freely accepted by the CPP leader:

There were . . . insufficient soldiers with the necessary training or qualifications to fill even half the positions left vacant by the departing British. In order to have an army at all, I had to accept what existed even though I know the danger of this course.³

Despite these words (which were in any case written retrospectively), it is unlikely that the full implications of this action were apparent to the Ghanaian political leadership. It was not just a general question of declining standards. Africanisation had a much more pervasive and insidious effect on the organisational cohesion of the army. For one thing, it resulted in extremely narrow age gaps between different ranks of the officer hierarchy. For another, it caused very high rates of mobility from post to post and from rank to rank. Some indications of the serious difficulties caused by such occupational fluidity were outlined at the end of the preceding chapter.

To these deleterious consequences of wholesale localisation must be added the marginal differences in skill that arose between the officer ranks. Sociologists have for long stressed the importance of recognised and established status systems in the regulation of tensions generated by competition in formal organisations. Pellegrin and Bates, for instance, approach the subject in terms of status congruities and incongruities. For them, an inverse connection between skill and rank cannot fail to produce widespread dissatisfaction within such systems.⁴ In this chapter, the full extent of institutional distortion in the Ghanaian military is revealed by meticulous

attention to career details concerning, among other factors, deficiencies with respect to age, experience, training, time spent in each rank and length of commissioned service.

Of course, the question of Africanisation was not confined to the armed forces, nor was it an issue that suddenly materialised in the wake of Independence. Campaigns for the localisation of the public services had been launched by the early proto-nationalist movements formed by the intelligentsia. These demands formed part of the CPP political platform. And the CPP government's *White Paper on the Report of the Lidbury Commission* of 1951 pledged "to accelerate the progress towards a completely indigenous civil service staffed entirely by Gold Coast Africans . . ."⁵ By April 1957, 60 percent of the total of 2,716 senior public servants were Ghanaians (see Table 2.2). At the end of 1959, when the number of senior office holders was 3,179, the expatriate share had declined to 27 percent.⁶

Localisation was seen as being at once an imperative of decolonisation and a prerequisite for national sovereignty. After Independence, a number of factors increased the attention focused on Africanisation and contributed to its rapid acceleration. One factor was Ghana's involvement in the Congo. As with the army officers, the government was embarrassed that technical civil service units sent to the Congo were usually headed by expatriates. Also, at a time when Ghana was attempting to establish itself as leader of a non-aligned and independent Africa, the CPP found it uncomfortable showing visiting Third World dignitaries around ministries in which Europeans were so prominent.

There were pressures too from ambitious Ghanaians, anxious to inherit the expatriate rates of pay, car allowances and the privileges and status associated with the top jobs of the bureaucratic ladder. Finally, when the Republic was declared in 1960, politicians felt considerably more freedom of action; fewer external restraints intervened between their wishes and policy. Immediately after July 1960, therefore, a series of decisions terminated the appointments of senior foreign civilian officials. A year later, all posts in the Administrative class were occupied by Ghanaians. With these developments in mind, we shall now investigate the decision to remove European army officers, for it should be appreciated that the Africanisation issue was part of a wider decolonising process. It was not restricted to the military establishment.

British Officers Dismissed

Earlier passages have traced the progress of localisation in the armed forces of the Gold Coast/Ghana up to 1960. It will be remembered that the outbreak of war in 1939 led to a decision to grant commissions to Africans who had served as cadets. Sergeant Seth Antony was the first Gold Coaster to successfully complete the OCTU course in England. He was awarded an emergency commission in 1941. A number of emergency short-service commissions were granted soon after the war. However, it was

not until after the British cabinet decision of June 1947 that an announcement was made (in November 1948) that the Army Council was prepared to grant permanent and regular short-service commissions to Africans. All the early Ghanaian officers came up through the enlisted ranks. They were either NCOs in the Education Service or clerks in the Gold Coast Regiment. These included the first three to be commissioned: Ankrah, Michel and S.J.A. Otu. In all, eight African NCOs who had served in the ranks during 1939-1945 were commissioned between 1947-1951.

In 1951, spaces for African cadets were made available at Sandhurst and localisation in the NCO ranks was speeded up with the introduction of leadership courses for Africans at Teshie. At Independence in March 1957, twenty-nine of the 238 officers were Africans (and all but two of the Ghanaians had come up through the ranks). This represented a much lower proportion than any other branch of the public service. The rigorous selection procedures demanded by the British military authorities, and the low local reputation of the army, were offered as two of the main explanations for the low proportion of blacks in the officer corps.

After 6 March 1957, there was a significant rise in the number of African commissionings (Table 4.1), but there was not, in fact, a real transfer of command. Preoccupied with the responsibilities of office and with consolidating its political base, the administration appeared at first not to be unduly concerned with army matters.⁷ While the military establishment was transferred to the newly independent state in its entirety, the CDS and his British assistants—who held all the top command positions and the bulk of middle and junior officer posts—exercised decisive control over internal military matters.

Paley's Africanisation programme, which envisaged all ranks up to and including lieutenant-colonel to be held by Ghanaians before the end of 1967, and the withdrawal of all British officers by 1970, had not been amended by the transfer of power. And although the CPP was subjected to a certain amount of criticism from the Opposition for continuing the cautious colonial policy of gradually phased indigenisation, it accepted the British officers' view that the internal affairs of the army should be regulated by established military practices.

In a speech to the National Assembly three months after Independence, Mr K.A. Gbedemah, Minister of Defence and External Affairs, explained the government's determination to concentrate on quality rather than quantity. He conceded that while the Africanisation programme might appear "a bit slow" to an outsider

very few officers in any army reach the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel before they have completed twenty years service; when we consider that in the past we had no Ghanaian officers at all, the reason becomes obvious. I do not think that any Hon. member on either side of the House would wish us to jeopardise the standard of our Army . . . by unduly promoting officers to the higher ranks before they have acquired the qualifications and experience for them.

Gbedemah also explained that

the Government had to be very careful to preserve in the Army suitable promotion prospects, which will encourage young men of the highest qualities to seek a military career. If too many officers are recruited or promoted at the same time, there will in the end be promotion blockages in the higher ranks, and eventually the only solution will be that a number of those officers will have to be retired before the normal retiring age.⁸

The statement reflected the views of the minister's British advisers who were willing to localise so long as standards and efficiency were preserved. These views were not to prevail for long. As was explained in the previous two chapters, Nkrumah evolved plans for using the expanded armed forces to further his concurrent policies of non-alignment and pan-Africanism. It was during the Congo operation that he decided to dispense with his expatriate officer corps. On 22 September 1961, shortly before the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Ghana, General Alexander, his deputy, Brigadier Hubert Le Patourel (a holder of the Victoria Cross), eighty British officers in command positions and approximately 120 British WOs and NCOs were suddenly dismissed from the army. These changes were a logical, albeit much more drastic, development of the decision to withdraw Ghana from the Army Advisory Council for West Africa in 1958 and to sever the link with the RWAFF on Independence Day in 1959. In the final analysis, Nkrumah saw both these bodies and his British officers in the same light: they were impediments to Ghana's control over her own national army.

In his letter of dismissal, Dr Nkrumah accused Alexander of proceeding too slowly with the Africanisation programme. The president also pointed out that he was greatly disturbed by the British government's assistance to secessionist elements in Katanga. It had therefore become "politically imperative that, in present circumstances, direct command of the Ghana Armed Forces should be held by Ghanaians."⁹ In the same letter, Nkrumah proclaimed himself Supreme Commander of the armed forces and instructed Alexander to hand over his post to Stephen Otu (whose temporary rank of brigadier had been made substantive a few months earlier on 1 July). As the two officers left Flagstaff House together, Otu turned to Alexander and said: "General, excuse me for bothering you at this time, but can you possibly lend me some major-general's insignia?"¹⁰

It was not only the Congo operation and the alleged dilatoriness of Alexander's Africanisation programme which led to the dismissals. Nkrumah had been considering such a move for months. He had recently returned from a tour of China and Eastern Europe during which time he had been promised extensive military aid. Moreover, a month before his 1961 July-August trip, an agreement had also been reached with the Canadian government to provide a training team. A formal contract was signed on 8 January 1962. By early 1962, about thirty Canadian officers were attached to the army as instructors, either at the Teshie Military Academy or at the training centre in Kumasi. None of the Canadians went to the Congo.

A number of other issues had caused friction between the British CDS and the government. One of these was Nkrumah's decision to send army cadets to the Soviet Union, a plan which caused several altercations between Alexander, who pointed out that such a move would split the training and outlook of the officers into two camps, and the then Defence Minister, Mr C. de Graft Dickson. Often, too, Alexander had to defend expatriate officers from false accusations from Ghanaian MPs. On one occasion, such an incident occurred when a British major prevented a junior minister from helping himself to carpets and furniture from the Ordnance Depot. In the third place, there was also pressure from the Soviet diplomats, who had produced a paper criticising the presence of British officers in the army, and from the Casablanca countries, who argued that the presence of "imperialist" officers in Accra was a handicap to the establishment of an African High Command. Lastly, it was difficult to reconcile Alexander's continued presence in the army with Ghana's "move to the left" which resulted from the rise of the militant wing of the CPP and its influence on Nkrumah.¹¹

Filling the Gap: Officer Recruitment and Education

The sudden ejection of experienced expatriate officers—which signalled extensive changes in the social composition and organisational unity of the military establishment—could not have been contemplated without the considerable development in the training of African officer cadets that had taken place since March 1957. The Ghanaian officer corps had grown from twenty-nine at Independence, to fifty-nine in December 1958 and to almost 120 at the end of 1960. By December 1961, the number stood at 205. As was noted in Chapter 4, these figures represented a fivefold increase in a period of less than five years.

Such an expansion in the number of African commissionings was made possible partly by transforming the inter-territorial cadet school (ROSTS) into Ghana's own military academy (MATS), from which cadets were to be commissioned directly. This transition meant that the vast majority of officers commissioned after mid-1960 received their entire officer training at Teshie, whereas most officers commissioned prior to that date had done the major part of their training in Britain after completing the six-month recruit course at ROSTS. There was, therefore, a relatively clear-cut distinction between the ex-rankers who had been commissioned in the late 1940s and during the 1950s following service as enlisted men in the ranks (later undergoing officer training in Britain and serving under expatriates), and the Teshie-trained direct entry secondary school leavers, who had not been subordinate to British officers. As will be shown in Chapter 8, these differences were to be important determinants in the evolution and structure of the 1966 conspiracy.

From April 1960, when the Military Academy received its first intake, the preliminary course (six months) was also obligatory for naval and air

force cadets. The naval recruits then completed their training at BRNC Dartmouth, while their air force equivalents went on to the flying schools at Ternhill (in England) and Takoradi.

The army continued to send its best cadets to RMA Sandhurst where up to ten places were reserved for Ghana each year. Thus, of the fifty students who completed the MATS Intake I course, five—K. Adade-Takyi, K. Agbo, K.S.B. Awuah, E.K.T. Donkoh and J.B. Osei-Antwi—went on to Sandhurst. A few others (ex-sergeants who were given short-service commissions, many of which were converted into regular commissions within a couple of years) continued their training at the shorter (sixteen-week) and less expensive course at Mons, Aldershot, while some went on to India's Dehra Dun.

Originally, the MATS course was to be of two years—very much on the lines of Sandhurst with a commandant, a director of studies and supporting staff of whom a small minority at MATS were Ghanaian—with a planned output of sixty cadets a year. But the government's pressures to increase the pace of localisation forced Alexander to make the course an eighteen-month one and to double the annual intake of cadets to 120. Then, because of the almost overnight exodus of expatriates, the MATS staff were ordered to commission Intake II together with Intake I. This happened in October 1961. According to the then director of studies, "Intake II were quite simply not ready for it. They had done only twelve months of what should have been a two-year course. These sorts of decisions would come through from the top and there was nothing you could do about it."¹² Three months later, in January 1962, de Graft Dickson ordered the reduction of all subsequent courses to one year.

Nevertheless, the increased training facilities made available by the establishment of the Military Academy does not in itself explain the subsequent surge of applicants for cadet places. Indeed, any reader referring back to the section on officer recruitment in Chapter 2, would probably be surprised that the army was able to think in terms of an annual output of even sixty officers. The fact is that after Independence there was a significant increase in the aggregate of applicants for officer training. And, from 1960, the number of officers drawn directly from secondary schools began to heavily outnumber those recruited from the ranks.¹³

One rather general explanation for the increased popularity of an army career among secondary school graduates may have been the improvement in the military's status and self-image that accompanied Ghana's passage from colony to independent state. As Luckham argues in his study of the Nigerian military, "Independence linked the army to the symbols of sovereignty, not dependence."¹⁴ Perhaps, too, the emphasis put on the armed forces by Nkrumah, together with his plans to expand the armed forces and integrate them into his continental designs, did something to improve the army's standing as an institution of the state.

It is likely, however, that of greater consequence in enticing young Ghanaians into uniform was the government's decision to raise the salary

and fringe benefits of officers to approximate parity with university graduates starting in the civil service. The end result was that in early 1961, a newly commissioned second-lieutenant could then expect to earn marginally more than a graduate entering the civil service. Newspaper advertisements lingered in some detail on questions of pay so that potential candidates would be well-aware that a second-lieutenant's starting salary was £663, with a major's income exceeding double that sum. During this period, the basic pay of a private soldier was two times the national minimum wage.

Quite apart from these monetary inducements, direct recruitment from schools to the Teshie military academy was encouraged by the prospect of early promotion to high rank—especially following the expulsion of British officers in September 1961. In 1957, the promotion prospects of black officers could only be described as limited, particularly as compared to opportunities in the Administrative grade of the civil service. This feature had been one of the relative attractions of the civil service in the 1950s; by 1960, however, the service had been largely Ghanaianised, leaving the armed forces in an advantageous position for attracting ambitious school-leavers with an eye on early promotion and the societal status associated with a high regular income. More and more, then, the prospect of comparatively high pay and early promotion brought in increasing numbers of secondary school graduates, even though an army career as yet conferred less prestige than that enjoyed by a civil servant with a university degree.

Prejudice towards the army had also been reduced as a consequence of school visits to Teshie (for instance, five secondary schools visited MATS in June 1960) and the introduction of cadet training units at Prempah College, Achimota School, Tamale Government School, Adisadel College and St. Augustine's College. Thus, of the thirty-one army officer cadets who were commissioned from Intake I, eighteen were recruited from the five schools mentioned above, one third of them from Achimota. Of the remaining thirteen, nine also graduated from secondary school (mostly from the smaller and less well-known secondary schools but including, nonetheless, one each from the famous Mfantipim and Opoku Ware schools). Only four had seen service in the ranks before entering Teshie. A roughly similar pattern emerges from analysis of the thirty-four army officers commissioned from Intake II, of whom only three were selected for officer training from the ranks. All the others had completed their secondary education.¹⁵ Quite clearly, the educational background of these officers differed markedly from those officers who had been commissioned between 1947–1960.

Finally, the maximum age requirement for entry for candidates who were not already in the army was raised in 1959 from twenty-two to twenty-five, thus accommodating those who had already spent some years in other occupations such as teaching and who now appreciated the merits and opportunities of a military career.

In 1960, the army passed a new milestone when three university graduates were recruited: O.K. Bonsu joined the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers with a degree in engineering (he transferred to the air force as an aircraft

engineer in January 1961); P.R. Nyarku was commissioned into the Pay Service, climbing to the rank of lieutenant-colonel by 1966; and Frank Bernasko, an old boy of Adisadel, who joined the Education Service after taking his B.Sc. at University College, Legon. Bernasko, who during this author's visits to Ghana was jocularly known as the "military headmaster" because of his unusually high academic qualifications for a soldier (he also took an external law degree), became Director of Army Education in 1967.

Four more graduates were commissioned in 1961. P.K. Nkegbe, a history B.A. of Legon's Commonwealth Hall, and A.K. Amuzu, entered the Education Service. S.M. Asante, who obtained two degrees from Legon, was the first university graduate to join the Infantry, later becoming Accra's High Commissioner to London under Acheampong's National Redemption Council. J. Adjetey, who had been educated at Achimota between 1939-1942, joined the Dental Service. He obtained his B.D.S. at the School of Dentistry, Durham University, and was commissioned into the army as a captain in December 1961.

During the rest of the decade, a few university graduates were commissioned each year; most of these joined the Education, Medical and Dental Services. However, it was not until the early 1970s that the recruitment of university graduates began to significantly impact on the educational profile of the army officer corps.¹⁶

From the above analysis and from data displayed in Table 4.1, it can be appreciated that substantial progress was made in the recruitment of Ghanaians into the officer corps. To sum up briefly, in the year before the mass expulsion of British officers, thirty-six Africans were commissioned. In 1961, the figure was eighty-six and the following year it reached a peak of 156. One hundred and nine officers were commissioned in 1963, sixty-nine in 1964, sixty-eight in 1965 and eighty-six in 1966. By early 1967, there were almost 700 officers in the army. Later in this chapter, we will have more to say about the quality and experience of officers commissioned in the early 1960s as a result of Nkrumah's commitment to Africanisation and military expansion. However, it was not these officers who filled the majority of command and staff posts vacated by the British but mostly ex-rankers who had been commissioned in the late 1940s or during the 1950s.

Promotions in the Officer Corps

The upswing in the educational qualifications of officer cadets consequential upon improvements in the status and conditions of an army career (a mutually reinforcing process) generally applied to the officers recruited *after* 1960-1961. However, it was not these cohorts but rather those individuals commissioned between 1947-1960 who were the real beneficiaries of the sensational rates of promotion following the British officers' expulsion. As may be seen in Table 6.1, on 23 September 1961, eighteen captains, six majors, two lieutenant-colonels, one temporary colonel and one brigadier were promoted.¹⁷ All these men, with the exceptions of Adjeitey, Tachie-

TABLE 6.1

PROMOTION RATES OF GHANAIAN OFFICERS (MAJORS AND ABOVE), 23 SEPTEMBER 1961

Rank	Name	Age	Number of months from rank to rank and, in brackets, total time to attain each rank ^a								Officer service ^b (months)
			Lt	Capt	Maj	Lt.-Col	Col	Brig	Maj.-Gen		
Major-General	S.J.A. Otu	45	24	18 (42)	11 (53)	4 (57)	xx	119 (176)	3 (179)	169	
Brigadier	J.A. Ankrah	46	35	64 (99)	74 (173)	66 (239)	xx	18 (257)		175	
Colonel	N.A. Aferi ^c	41	18	18 (36)	65 (101)	20 (121)	9 (130)			138	
	D. Hansen ^c	41	18	36 (54)	21 (75)	27 (102)	3 (105)			138	
Lt.-Colonel	C.C. Bruce ^c	36	18	36 (54)	60 (114)	50 (164)				125	
	M.A. Otu ^c	36	18	36 (54)	36 (90)	8 (98)				97	
	M. Barwah	34	18	36 (54)	60 (114)	14 (128)				99	
	E.K. Kotoka	34	12	36 (54)	60 (114)	2 (116)				82	
	J.C. Adjeitey	38	xx	77 (77)	xx	13 (90)				31	
	M.M. Hassan	39	18	36 (54)	60 (114)	44 (158)				12	
Major	A.A. Crabbe	33	18	36 (54)	81 (135)					119	
	S.A. Lartey	36	18	36 (54)	70 (124)					97	
	A. K. Ocran	31	18	36 (54)	60 (114)					82	
	G.H. Slater	31	18	36 (54)	51 (105)					82	
	G.K. Yarboi	34	6	42 (48)	62 (110)					82	
	M.B. Sanni-Thomas	34	18	36 (54)	29 (83)					82	
	P.F. Quaye	36	18	36 (54)	77 (131)					76	

P. Laryea	34	xx	18 (18)	107 (125)	75
J.M. Ewa	31	18	36 (54)	32 (86)	76
J.T. Addy	35	18	36 (54)	48 (102)	76
D.C.K. Amenu	31	18	36 (54)	51 (105)	67
A.K. Kattah	28	18	36 (54)	39 (93)	67
I.A. Ashitey	31	18	36 (54)	35 (89)	67
G. Amoah	31	18	36 (54)	44 (98)	63
D.K. Addo	28	18	36 (54)	48 (102)	63
C.K. Tevie	32	18	36 (54)	56 (110)	61
D.G. Zanlerigu	28	18	36 (54)	35 (89)	55
C.R.R. Tachie-Menson	32	18	36 (54)	32 (86)	30

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); List of Ghanaian Senior Officers (Annex 'A', MOD/17619/Intelligence Service, Burma Camp, October 1976); Ghana Gazette 1959-1962; and interviews with Ministry of Defence officials.

^a These figures are based on the seniority dates utilised by the army for promotions and are not from actual dates of commission (as in b below).

^b These are the actual numbers of months served from dates of commission and are not (as in a above) based on the official army seniority dates.

^c Having been promoted to colonel and lieutenant-colonel respectively, Hansen and M.A. Otu were immediately given command of the navy (Hansen was given the rank of commodore) and air force (Otu was made group-captain).

^{xx} The rank is effectively by-passed as the seniority date coincides with the next rank up.

Menson and Hassan, who entered the officer corps in February 1959, March 1959 and September 1960 respectively, were commissioned before Independence.

S.J.A. Otu had been an officer for fourteen years and was aged forty-five when appointed CDS in the rank of major-general, while Ankrah had served as an officer for only a few months longer and was forty-six when he was promoted brigadier from the rank of lieutenant-colonel (temporary colonel) to become deputy CDS.¹⁸ Lieutenant-Colonels Aferi and Hansen, both aged forty-one, were promoted colonel. Neither of them had held a commission for longer than eleven and a half years.

Six majors who had been commissioned between April 1951 and September 1960 were also promoted. With an average and median age of thirty-six, they had served on average for six years two months; but there were wide differences in their military background. Bruce, for instance, had been an officer for a little more than a decade (he had been commissioned in April 1951), whilst Barwah and M.A. Otu had served for over eight years. On the other hand, Adjeitey had served for two and a half years and Hassan (commissioned on 19 September 1960) for marginally under twelve months. Although this apparent anomaly can be partially explained by the system of seniority dates utilised by the army (see notes a and b, Table 6.1), it is quite clear that a wide chasm, in terms of military knowledge and experience, existed between lieutenant-colonels commissioned at opposite poles of the 1951-1961 decade.

The eighteen officers who were raised to the rank of major (without having had to take the normal exam) also benefitted from accelerated promotion rates, although within this group, as within the cohort of lieutenant-colonels, there were significant disparities in age and experience. For example, Crabbe had been an officer for almost ten years before being promoted major, Lartey had served for eight years and Ocran, Slater and Yarboi had been commissioned for just under seven years. But the majors commissioned during the second half of the 1950s had risen through the hierarchy even more spectacularly. Amenu, Kattah and Ashitey, who were commissioned in the year preceding Independence, had only seen five and a half years service in the corps of officers; while Zanlerigu (commissioned 1957) and Tachie-Menson (commissioned 1959) had served for less than five years in the former's case and two and a half years in the latter's case.

On the basis of the foregoing material (and especially from the figures collated in the last column of Table 6.1), it can be seen that almost without exception among the majors, the later the date an officer received his commission the quicker was his rise to the rank of major. This pattern is also apparent, albeit less obviously, in the seniority dates utilised by the army: most officers took fifty-four months to reach the rank of captain but, with the exceptions of Quaye and Laryea—whose official promotion from captain to major took seventy-seven and 107 months respectively—the trend noted above of speedier promotions for those officers commissioned in the second half of the 1950s is maintained. This tendency was underlined by

TABLE 6.2

RANK DISTRIBUTION OF THE GHANAIAN OFFICER CORPS (REGULAR COMBAT ONLY)^a, 23 SEPTEMBER 1961

Rank	No. of officers	% of officers	Age span	Average age
Major-General	1	1.25	45	45
Brigadier	1	1.25	46	46
Colonel	2	2.50	41	41
Lt.-Colonel	6	7.50	34-39	36.2
Major	19	23.75	28-36	31.9
Captain	17	21.25	27-35	30.6
Lieutenant	29	36.25	23-32	25.5
2nd Lieutenant ^b	5	6.25	21-24	23
Total	80	100.00	21-46	29.6

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); Ghana Gazette 1957-1960.

^a Arms A, B, C, D, E, F, and G of Table 4.1.

^b On 30 September 1961, 30 officer cadets were commissioned into the seven combat arms as Second-Lieutenants. Had the table been shifted forward one week to that date, the Second-Lieutenants would have constituted 32.82 percent (35 out of 110) of the officer corps; their age span would have been 20-24, and their average age 21.9 instead of 23.

the age margins within the group of majors (Quaye and Lartey were thirty-six; Kattah, Addo and Zanlerigu were only twenty-eight), causing a certain amount of discontent among officers who had not been as well-placed as the junior majors to benefit from the rapid rates of promotion resulting from Africanisation.

Status Discrepancies in the Army Hierarchy

In contrast to the sizeable intra-rank age margins among the majors (and to a much lesser extent among the lieutenant-colonels), a further modification in the British-bequeathed institutional format stemming from indigenisation and the rapid and uneven rates of promotion was the absence of significant age differentials between the rank echelons in the officer corps. In Table 6.2, the distribution, age span and average age of each rank is displayed. Table 6.3 provides the spread of ranks from second-lieutenant to major-

TABLE 6.3
AGE STRUCTURE OF THE GHANAIAN OFFICER CORPS (REGULAR COMBAT ONLY)^a, 23 SEPTEMBER 1961

Age group	No. of officers	% distribution	Rank span ^b	
			Actual	Approximate
20-24	16	20	2nd Lt.- Lt.	2nd Lt. - Lt.
25-29	24	30	Lt. - Major	Lt. - Capt.
30-34	28	35	Lt. - Lt.-Col.	Capt. - Lt.-Col.
35-39	8	10	Capt. - Lt.-Col.	Major - Lt.-Col.
40 and over	4	5	Col. - Maj.-Gen.	Col. - Maj.-Gen.
Total	80	100	2nd Lieutenant	- Major-General

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); Ghana Gazette 1957-1960.

^a Arms A, B, C, D, E, F, and G of Table 4.1.

^b The approximate rank span of the three middle age groups (25-39) provides a more realistic picture than the actual rank span of these groups. The 35-39 age group, for instance, contained only 1 captain, the other 7 officers in the group being majors or lieutenant-colonels. Similarly, only 3 of the 24 officers in the 25-29 age group were majors; the approximate rank span was thus lieutenant to captain.

general for five age groups. It is immediately obvious from both sets of data that the army's age structure and rank distribution were greatly out of balance.

As demonstrated in Table 6.2, the various strata of the officer hierarchy were filled with individuals within a narrow age span of each other. Thus, the single major-general was only four years senior to the colonels who were themselves only two years older than the most senior lieutenant-colonel.¹⁹ Moreover, the age brackets of the six lieutenant-colonels (who made up 7.5 percent of the officer corps on 23 September 1961) and the eighteen majors (who constituted almost a quarter of the corps) overlapped quite markedly, while the two rank levels were separated by an average age of only four years.

But it was within the middle and lower tiers of the officer corps that the structural age distortions were most marked. For not only was the age span between the ranks of major and captain (the two ranks constituting 45 percent of the corps) almost totally negligible—the majors ranging in age from twenty-eight to thirty-six and the captains between twenty-seven and thirty-five—but the average age difference was a mere fifteen months. The age differentials were more obvious between the three lowest ranks of the officer hierarchy, although even here there were noticeable anomalies. Thus, almost a quarter (seven out of twenty-nine) of the lieutenants were on average two years older than the youngest captain, while more than 58 percent (ten out of seventeen) of the captains were the same age or, in most cases, younger than the oldest lieutenant. The actual and approximate rank levels occupied by the different age groupings is charted in Table 6.3.

In addition to causing slim average age margins between the officer ranks, another legacy of rapid localisation was the distorting effect it had on the overall age structure of the army. As may be seen in Table 6.3, 85 percent (sixty-eight out of eighty) of the officer corps were aged thirty-four or less. Only 15 percent (twelve officers) were thirty-five or more. The average age of the eighty officers was twenty-nine years and seven months. Moreover, the extremely youthful character of the Ghanaian officer corps was precipitated and highlighted by the admission to the army between 1961–1967 of a large number of young officers—almost all of whom were in their early twenties²⁰—and by the fact that the Chief of Defence, Major-General Otu, was only forty-five (as indeed was Aferi when he was appointed CDS in 1965).

Not surprisingly, the army's overall age composition was significantly at variance with that which was in the 1960s (and still is in the 1980s) normal in the British Army, the body from which it had been created. To explain further: between 1956–1972, approximately 42 percent of the British officer corps were aged thirty-four or less—half the proportion that existed in the Ghana Army at September 1961. An equally obvious discrepancy is noticeable in the oldest age group. In the British Army, where the system of selection and promotion is designed to regulate the flow of officers through the various ranks by holding out to its members the promise of an orderly and

successful career, about 40 percent of officers were aged forty and over in the early 1960s. This should be compared to the September 1961 Ghana figure of 5 percent. Again, only a British officer of quite exceptional ability could hope to reach the rank of colonel at the age of forty-one—the average age of majors in Britain—but in Ghana both colonels were this age, while the majors were almost ten years younger than their British equivalents.²¹

In short, the operation of the dual processes of rapid indigenisation and the simultaneous expansion of the military establishment meant that, over a very brief space of time, the officer corps was filled with men within a very narrow age span of each other. A situation had been created in which a few years of seniority represented a wide gap in rank. Conversely, the distinctions in rank were not matched by significant differences in professional experience and expertise. Indeed, the margin in commissioned experience between the CDS (commissioned May 1948) and the most recently commissioned officer (Second-Lieutenant E.K. Utuka, commissioned July 1961) was only thirteen years two months.

Those officers who entered the army first were quickly catapulted into the senior and middle ranks; but the later arrivals, who filled the junior positions, were not able to take advantage of the promotional opportunities resulting from Africanisation. What is more, the accelerated elevation of officers who lacked the experience, tradition and training for advancement to higher command and staff duties, generated unrealistic career aspirations; and expectations of such mobility remaining a permanent feature of the military career pattern were not borne out after the initial wave of promotions. In such circumstances, unless there is continuous expansion of the armed forces, a serious promotional freeze is likely to result, the potential consequences of which include both inter-rank jealousies and fierce intra-rank competition for professional advancement. For, as will be stressed in the following pages, if selection for promotion in formal organisations is based on criteria other than achievement, the cohesion of that body will almost certainly be undermined by strains and conflict.

It has often been suggested that the pace of localisation in a number of former British colonies caused a further status aberration because the first generation of army officers were invariably promoted from the ranks and were more poorly educated than subsequent officer generations.²² As our earlier analysis of the educational qualifications of those men commissioned up to the late 1950s vis-à-vis the post-1960 generation of officers has shown, this wider observation is confirmed in the present study. Only a quarter of the former group had successfully completed secondary school, whereas almost 90 percent of cadets in the early and mid-1960s were direct entry secondary school (and in some cases university) graduates.

In Ghana, where the value of formal education was (and is) heavily emphasised, one would expect the younger, better qualified, officers to look down on their superiors who, in their turn, might well be uneasy about their own relative lack of educational achievement. Those in the lower grades become disgruntled at the barring of their own promotion oppor-

tunities by the "time-servers," whose seniority rests upon a few years or less in age or entry into the service. Thus, one of the most obvious results of the smallness (and especially the absence) of skill differences between the ranks was to produce the potential for widespread discontent in which the growth of secret subversive groupings might flourish.²³

The present writer detected numerous instances of such attitudes during his visits to Ghana in the mid-1970s as well as a strong interest, on the part of long-serving officers nearing retirement, in resuming their education (in several cases up to degree level). These considerations are mentioned at this stage because they helped to nurture sentiments of relative deprivation on the part of younger officers whose occupational advancement seemed blocked for many years to come. The serious consequences of ignoring Gbedemah's speech to the National Assembly in 1957 were not to become directly visible until after the 1966 coup when the NLC faced its most serious threat in the shape of the junior officers' revolt of April 1967. On that occasion, the insurgents planned to kill all lieutenant-colonels and above.²⁴

Declining Professional Standards

Another source of organisational cleavage were the changes pertaining to age and professional experience as between junior officers on the one hand and NCOs and warrant officers on the other. Most of the men commissioned up to 1960 had served for a number of years in the ranks. As earlier chapters have endeavoured to demonstrate, this state of affairs was the direct or indirect product of colonial recruiting practices, the poor esteem in which the native population held the army and the British military authorities' determination to maintain standards. But after 1960, the army was commissioning into the officer corps considerably more direct entry recruits than Other Ranks. While this meant a marked improvement in successive cadet cohorts' educational qualifications, it also implied an initial diminishment in military knowledge and experience within the junior officer ranks. Now for the first time, the bulk of African officers were being commissioned with neither the practical experience nor the soldierly *camaraderie* that comes from service in the ranks.

Also, in order to fill the vacuum created by the overnight removal of expatriates, the Ministry of Defence was provisionally forced to lower the normal criteria for the selection of secondary school cadets.²⁵ Although this only applied in 1961 and 1962, the impact of the decision was widespread since large numbers of men were commissioned in the immediate aftermath of this period: 265 between 1962-1963. Almost 55 percent (144) of these went into the Infantry.²⁶

Equally significant, perhaps, in its effect on the quality of the officer corps was the synchronous decision to temporarily lower standards in the selection of NCOs for cadet training. The end result was that men like Sergeants A.K. Yovonoo,²⁷ K. Ayensu, R.E. Quarshie, S.E. Dey-Kwasi and

D.A. Nyarko—previously considered unfit for commissioned service—were suddenly picked out for courses at Teshie. Almost all of these individuals, many of whom were in their mid-thirties, were granted regular administrative commissions in the QM Branch (General List).

In the context of officer-NCO/WO relations, such deviations from the more rigorous selection procedures insisted upon by the departed British were likely to cause an early decline in rank-and-file respect and deference towards their officers. In an army where serious incongruities in military experience and age exist within the officer corps, the additional problem of parallel discrepancies between experienced NCOs and neophyte subalterns is likely to produce serious strains in the disciplinary system.

On a number of occasions in the mid-1970s, serving and retired NCOs informed this writer that they rued the day when the British officers left Ghana. One ex-serviceman, a guide at the Kumasi Military Museum, said: "When the British were here they looked after us and we respected them, but afterwards the officers thought only of themselves." It is quite clear that after 1961 a sharp deterioration took place in the relationship between officers and ranks. From all reports, more often than not, disciplinary problems stemmed from the overbearing and arrogant attitude of over-promoted African officers. This was something that worried General Alexander who wrote that

power is apt to go to the heads of the young officer, and there is a grave danger that this power may be abused. The sudden promotion to high rank very often spoils the best. It is all too easy . . . to forget the men.²⁸

Cracks in the cohesion of the military establishment were also widened by the contrast in the ethnic composition of the rank-and-file on the one hand and the officers on the other. For at least a decade after Independence, most of the ranks came from that area previously known as the Northern Territories. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of officers were from the southern and coastal regions. It is true that many of the officers had been recruited from the ranks, but almost all of these came from Giffard's "educated tribes in the south."²⁹ In the early 1960s, only a tiny minority of officers (Zanlerigu, Zumah and Iddisah, for instance) came from the Gur-speaking peoples of the North.³⁰

Thus, the localisation of the armed forces did not lead to a departure from the pre-1960 pattern of recruitment insofar as ethnic/regional considerations were concerned. In fact, the emphasis on recruiting secondary school graduates would have certainly reduced the proportion of northern officers had it not been for the disproportionately large number of cadets recruited from the Government Secondary School, Tamale. Of the fourteen northerners commissioned in the period 1960–1961, eleven had been educated at GSS Tamale.

Although an ethnic dichotomy between different status layers of an organisation does not necessarily lead to mutual antagonism, a certain enmity between the officers and ranks of the Ghana Army became quickly visible

to this observer in the mid-1970s. An unconcealed resentment on the part of soldiers towards their educated "showboy" superiors was noticeable, as was the disdain shown by some officers towards semi-literate *bugabugas* from the most backward regions of the hinterland. As is indicated in excerpts of a British Intelligence officer's unpublished report made available to this writer by its author, there is some evidence to suggest that the state of affairs apparent in 1974-1975 was equally if not more obvious in the 1960s:

One major weakness of the army is in its officers—they vary very considerably. Some are very good, others are so weak as to be useless. Going around two battalions at Tamale I was left with an impression of "we" and "they," not of one battalion with one purpose and one spirit.³¹

Commenting on the 1960s, one retired general admitted that most unit commanders were unable to administer their troops effectively, the job being left to a few seasoned WOs and sergeants. But

Even the efforts of these were frustrated by the junior commanders . . . through ungentlemanly and unofficer-like conduct such as open bullying and abuse of NCOs, . . . misuse of transport to convey girlfriends, inattention to troop welfare and misappropriation of unit funds. This behaviour would be known by the troops and they are bound, secretly at least, to hold the officers in contempt.³²

Quite apart from forcing the army to temporarily lower standards in the selection process of potential officers, the government's commitment to Africanisation meant—as we have already begun to suggest—that almost all command positions were occupied by officers who were younger and less experienced than should theoretically have been the case. The break with hitherto established organisational norms was taken one stage further since many junior officers, particularly lieutenants and captains, held posts which should have been filled by officers of higher rank. Lieutenants were fulfilling tasks usually assigned to captains; while captains found themselves in command of companies, a role more appropriate to the rank of major.

The slide from established precedent was given an extra twist since many officers were elevated into higher acting or temporary ranks before the promotion was officially due and gazetted. For instance, Captain L.A. Okai, a twenty-seven year old infantry officer with less than six years commissioned service, replaced Major Wickes as Military Secretary with the acting rank of major. Barely a year earlier, Okai had been a lieutenant.

As one might expect, these innovations were responsible for a decline in the competence of the officer corps and a corresponding fall in the professional expertise of the army as a whole. Although writing about the civil service, A.L. Adu (sometime head of that body) has pointed to several problems inherent in rapid indigenisation that have equal relevance to this study. His main fear was the "inevitable" fall in standards.³³

Similar qualms had been expressed by British officers serving in the country. A large number of Ministry of Defence documents examined during the course of fieldwork in Ghana, including a number of Situation Reports written by senior officers, illustrate the scepticism of expatriates to early Africanisation. For example, a few months before Independence, and only five years before Nkrumah dismissed all his white officers, Colonel J.M.A. Braddell, Pay-Master General of the Gold Coast Military Forces, wrote to the War Office in London:

A plan exists for the Africanisation of all these RAPC (Royal Army Pay Corps) posts, with the sergeants' posts in each of the 3 Battalions as priority. A course for training selected AORs (African Other Ranks) is now taking place. . . . At the time of writing, the most marked aspect of the scheme is the inability of AORs to do well in even a very simple written examination.³⁴

On 23 September 1961, Captain M.O. Koranteng, an ex-ranker who had seen only two years commissioned service, found himself at the head of the Pay Service in place of the former CO, Colonel Hazelwood. The experience Koranteng and his African military staff of four officers and 115 Other Ranks brought to the Service was naturally limited, a state of affairs paralleled in the other Arms/Services.

Another example concerns the case of Lieutenant E.G. Nyarku, one of three university graduates commissioned in 1960. Nyarku had transferred from the Pay Service to the Education Service and had just been promoted captain (in July 1961) as a member of the MATS training staff. When Major Shapland was dismissed from his post as OC, Teshie Military Academy, Nyarku was appointed in his place. According to the then director of studies, "the first thing I noticed was that he was wearing majors' crowns. He was very upset at being appointed the Officer Commanding since he didn't have a clue what to do." What made matters worse was "here we had an Education Corps chap expected to take over an infantry training unit and he knew nothing about it."³⁵

The relative absence of professional experience within the wide range of officer commands was exacerbated by the rapid turnover in horizontal postings (job transfer across the board without promotion) resulting from the high rate of mobility up through the military hierarchy. These upheavals were on top of the disruptions caused by Nkrumah's determination to have a high proportion of black officers in his Congo force. The net result was that in the two years 1960 and 1961, the First Brigade, for instance, had three different commanders and the First Battalion had four. Such succession rates reflected comparable rates of turnover at battalion second-in-command and at company command and second-in-command positions. Under such circumstances, it would be very difficult for any organisation to establish cohesion, continuity and a common sense of purpose; but for a rapidly expanding army, struggling to assert its mission and self-identity in the early years of statehood, the problems were of a much greater magnitude.

Fortunately, the wholesale shambles which surely must have resulted from simply expelling the expatriate contract and seconded officers was averted by the arrival of Canadian military technicians and training officers³⁶ and, more importantly, by the inauguration in 1962 of a British Joint Services Training Team. The JSTT, composed of officers and ranks from the three armed services under the command of a brigadier, began its work in April 1962 (although the formal bilateral agreement was signed on 1 May) with a total strength of 248 officers and men. It provided training and advisory functions; however, although some of its officers continued to hold executive appointments in the navy and air force, where the technical problems of command were much greater, no British officer exercised command responsibilities in the army. The JSTT's strength declined only marginally between 1962-1965 (see Appendix A), but from 1966 until 1971, when the agreement was terminated, it rapidly diminished in strength.³⁷ The cost of the Canadian and British programmes, except for pay and allowances, was borne by Accra.

Notes

1. R.M. Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference-Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case," *World Politics* 23, 3 (April 1971), p.401.
2. A.R. Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-67* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp.2-3.
3. K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p.38.
4. R.J. Pellegrin and F.L. Bates, "Congruity and Incongruity of Status Attributes Within Occupations and Work Positions," *Social Forces* 38 (October 1959), p.24.
5. *Statement of the Gold Coast Government on the Report of the Commission on the Civil Service of the Gold Coast 1950-51* (Accra: Government Printing Department, 1951), p.1.
6. *1959 Report of the Public Service Commission* (Accra: Government Printer, 1959), p.3.
7. Quite unlike the situation in Nigeria where, for several years before Independence, many politicians had taken considerable interest in the size and ethnic/regional composition of the army.
8. *Parliamentary Debates* (Accra: Government Printer, 12 June 1957), Vol.6, cols.779-783. See, too, *Parliamentary Debates* of 4 December 1957, Vol.13, cols.304-310.
9. H.T. Alexander, *African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (London: Pall Mall, 1965), p.149.
10. *Ibid.* David Hansen, who had by then recovered from the wounds received at the hands of his mutinous troops in the Congo, took over from a British officer as head of the navy; and M.A. Otu was appointed air force commander.
11. For a comprehensive analysis of these shifts, see T. Jones, *Ghana's First Republic 1960-1966* (London: Methuen, 1976), especially Chapter IV.
12. Interview, Mr W.W. Stallybrass, 31 March 1980.
13. Interviews, Colonel J. Enninful, 30 July 1975; and Colonel L.K. Kwaku, 5 August 1975.
14. Luckham, *The Nigerian Military*, pp.233-334.

15. Details from *The Square: Journal of the Ghana Military Academy* 2 (July 1961); and interviews with Teshie graduates.

16. The numbers of graduates entering the army between 1960–1970 were as follows: 1960: 3, 1961: 4, 1962: 5, 1963: 4, 1964: 5, 1965: 3, 1966: 5, 1967: 6, 1968: 7, 1969: 7, 1970: 6. If there was any doubt as to an officer's graduate status, he was not included. These figures are thus subject to a small margin of error and are probably somewhat conservative. Information from interviews with Ministry of Defence officials and from the writer's special biographical file on the Ghanaian officer corps.

17. The one exception was Kotoka; he had been promoted to lieutenant-colonel three days earlier on 20 September after only eight weeks service as a major.

18. The job would have gone to Brigadier Michel, but he was killed in an air crash earlier that month. In the British CDS's words, Michel's "prime interest was the good of Ghana's armed services, not the good of Michel. He was moderate, balanced and had not allowed promotion to conquer reason." Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p.46.

19. However, the significance of this point is limited since the average age difference between colonels and half colonels was approximately five years.

20. More than 90 percent of whom were under twenty-five at the time of their commissioning. This was quite different from the age structure of those officers commissioned from the ranks between 1947–1957 (see Table 3.2) of whom only 17 percent were under twenty-five when they received their commissions. See, too, note b, Table 6.2.

21. Statistics on the British Army are taken from P.J. Dietz and J.F. Stone, "The British All-Volunteer Army," *Armed Forces and Society* 1, 2 (Winter 1975), pp.159–190.

22. J.S. Coleman and B. Brice, "The Role of the Military in Sub-Saharan Africa," in J.J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p.401; C.E. Welch, "Praetorianism in Commonwealth West Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, 2 (July 1972), p.220; and G. Kennedy, *The Military in the Third World* (London: Duckworth, 1974), p.78.

23. The organisational turbulence described in this chapter was not, of course, peculiar to the Ghana Army. *Mutatis mutandis*, it might be a description of say the Kenyan civil service or Nigerian universities and marketing boards at about the same time.

24. The concept of relative deprivation, and its pertinence to the counter-coup in particular and to this study as a whole, is developed in Chapter 11.

25. Normally, a potential officer was expected to have four credits in the West African School Certificate examination; but in 1961, the minimum academic standard required was reduced to four School Certificate passes. In some cases, even these criteria were waived because "if we stuck rigidly to the letter we wouldn't have got enough for each intake." Interview, Mr W.W. Stallybrass, 31 March 1980.

26. Table 4.1 provides a comprehensive breakdown of commissionings by year and Arm/Service.

27. Yovonoo, it will be remembered, figured in the Awhaitey trial. He was one of the Ewes who had written to Apaloo complaining about army conditions.

28. Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p.21. According to one officer, the Third Battalion mutiny was almost entirely due to the split between officers and ranks: "The ORs felt that the officers never listened to them. Administration was bad. They felt that the [Ghanaian] officers who took over from the British weren't up to standard. Sometimes they were saying they wished the British officers were back."

They were disappointed with their own officers." Interview, Colonel E.A. Yeboah, 12 August 1975.

29. See Chapter 2, note 48.

30. It was not until 1970 that the proportion of northerners in the officer corps gradually began to increase.

31. The officer, who requested anonymity, visited Ghana in 1967.

32. A.K.Ocran, *Politics of the Sword* (London: Rex Collings, 1977), p.112.

33. "This might have a disastrous result. . . . Africanisation for the sake of Africanisation only without relating it to a well-considered plan would undermine this policy." *The Civil Service in Commonwealth Africa* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), p.123.

34. *Situation Report from Colonel J.M.A. Braddell, Headquarters, Gold Coast Military Forces, Accra, British West Africa, to the War Office, London* (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 22 December 1956). Other reports, from different branches, came to similar conclusions. For further evidence of opposition from British battalion and unit commanders to a rapid Africanisation programme, see Sir John Smyth, *Bolo Whistler* (London: Frederick Muller, 1967), pp.199-200.

35. Interview, Mr W.W. Stallybrass, 31 March 1980.

36. See Canadian Department of External Affairs, "Military Training Assistance to Ghana," *External Affairs* (April 1962), pp.136-137.

37. Details from *Planned strengths of the British Joint Services Training Team, 1962-65* (Defence Adviser's Office, British High Commission, Accra) and interviews with British High Commission staff in Accra during 1975.

7

Civil-Military Relations in the First Republic: *Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes?*

Two weeks after installing himself as president of Ghana (following the April 1960 plebiscite on a draft republican constitution), Nkrumah committed his army to the Congo.¹ These two events should be regarded as a watershed in the relationship between the CPP and the army—for not only did the adoption of a new constitution mark a growth in the authoritarian nature of the regime, but also the decision to intervene in the Congo reflected changes in the legal relationship between Nkrumah and the military establishment.

Part IX of the July 1960 Constitution transferred ultimate responsibility for the armed forces from the Queen's representative in Accra, the British Governor-General, to the president. As from 1 July 1960, the head of state, as commander-in-chief (C-in-C), exercised the power to

commission persons as officers in the Forces and to order any of the said Forces to engage in operations for the defence of Ghana, for the preservation of public order, for relief in cases of emergency or for any other purpose appearing to the Commander-in-Chief to be expedient.²

As has been seen, Nkrumah's positive response to Gizenga's pleas for troops eventually resulted in the decision to expel British officers from Ghana. From 22 September 1961, the army was national in personnel as well as in name. This meant that the expatriates were no longer able to function as a buffer between the government and the army. Once this barrier had been removed, the military and Nkrumah confronted each other directly.

It might be thought that the decision to dispense with the British was universally popular with African officers. This was not the case. While the overnight change greatly improved their promotional chances—and "Who, after all, does not want promotion?" asked General Ocran in his account

of the episode³—many officers were disturbed by the wider implications of the news. “Unfortunately,” Ocran has written,

Nkrumah yielded prematurely . . . to the demand from within Ghana and from the more militant African countries and the East to do away with these white “colonial” officers. . . . I received the news with some apprehension. . . . Now that the British officers had been removed Nkrumah would make the Ghanaian officers do his will. He could take purely military decisions against or even without the expert professional advice of his Chief of Defence Staff, and he did. With the departure of the British officers the way was clear for him to do what he liked with the army.⁴

There was now no external constraint to Nkrumah’s domestic treatment of his armed forces. Those actions with regard to the army which the CPP did subsequently take, together with associated army apprehensions of what might happen, significantly accumulated and contributed over the next few years to the encouragement of attitudes within the military which ultimately made the 1966 coup possible.⁵ These sources of CPP-army discord constitute the bulk of historical materials presented in this chapter; the analytical treatment of these developments is largely focused on the format of civil-military relations that grew out of Nkrumah’s changing policies to matters of security.

One of the most pressing problems confronting the regime after September 1961 concerned the question of the army’s loyalty. The “Labadi T-junction affair” and the political activities of the military elsewhere on the continent had alerted the government to the threat on its own doorstep.⁶ The expatriate presence had introduced an unnatural element of stability within Ghana. Paley and Alexander had worked hard to keep politics out of the army by acting as arbiters on the delineation of spheres of relative autonomy between civil and military institutions. But when they left, no clearly defined areas of distinctive civil and military competence were bequeathed. Whereas previously Nkrumah had relied on the British to keep the army politically quiescent, it was now no longer possible to trust an all-African force in the same way.

In their theoretical discourses on armed forces and society, Huntington, Janowitz and Finer have devoted considerable attention to the question of how civilian supremacy over the military might be assured.⁷ Huntington draws a conceptual distinction between what he calls “objective” and “subjective” control. In the former, the officer corps is disciplined by its own professionalism, the most important constituent involving service to the community. He concludes that the more professional an army (that is the more it saw itself serving society), the less of a threat it would pose.⁸ According to the latter, subjective model, civilian political control is ensured by the denial of an independent military sphere. Here the army becomes an integral, though subordinate, part of the political authority, and is permeated by civilian values and interests.⁹

During the first few years after Independence, Ghana's civil-military relations were based on the West European concept of objective control in which an autonomous military professionalism is recognised. After September 1961, Nkrumah could not be sure of his officers since their loyalty depended largely on the presence of expatriate officers and NCOs. The president's apprehensions were fuelled by fears about his personal safety following a series of assassination attempts on his life. These incidents, two of which came very close to success, confirmed his doubts about the reliability of the regular security forces.

So, as a means of neutralising potential opposition, the inherited format of control was abandoned in favour of subjective civilian governance. An alternative policy emerged in which the regular armed forces were to be systematically imbued with the political purposes and orientations of the CPP. The programme to politicise the army was accompanied by further diversification of foreign training and supply programmes in which greater reliance was placed on aid from the socialist states. In this way, Nkrumah hoped to further offset the Western bias in training and equipment.

It also involved a strategy to raise rival security and intelligence formations staffed by loyal officers who were considered reliable. From the evidence available, it seems that the most important feature of "reliability" to emerge was related to ethnic/regional background: all the sensitive posts were held by Nzimas—Nkrumah's own ethnic group—and northerners.

As formulated under Nkrumah's direction, the new system took the shape of a National Security Service (NSS) which, it shall be argued, duplicated and usurped the functions of the conventional military and police forces. Although the two sectors existed side by side, the unmistakable trend was towards the newer security structures which were responsible, not to the Defence Ministry, but directly to the office of the president.¹⁰ In this system of institutional dualism, Nkrumah encouraged rivalries and dissensions among officers, thereby hoping to discourage them from taking united action against him.

Included within the NSS was Military Intelligence, Counter-Intelligence, the Cuban-trained civilian bodyguard, Special Intelligence and the President's Own Guard Regiment. More than any other counterweight to the inherited armed forces, it was the creation and enlargement of the Presidential Guard that contributed most to the growing atmosphere of insecurity in which the regular officers lived. Had Nkrumah's plans for the transformation of the security machine been completed, there can be little doubt that the army would have withered away. It was largely in an effort to forestall such an eventuality that the officers struck against the government in 1966. Their first targets were those units that were being groomed to take over responsibility for the security and maintenance of the CPP regime.

Internal Security and the Regular Forces: 1960–1964

The Ghanaian officer establishment took very little overt interest in the constitutional proposals leading to the April 1960 plebiscite and the sub-

sequent presidential election. No doubt, this was partly the result of Paley's strictures following Captain Awhaitey's court martial the previous year. And soon after his appointment as CDS in January 1960, General Alexander established a small Military Intelligence unit at army headquarters. Its primary function was to monitor the political activities of service personnel and to prevent the armed forces being exploited for subversive purposes. Thus, professional imperatives together with personal career considerations acted to keep the officers out of politics.

It was not until the serious setbacks experienced by their forces in the Congo that the black officers began to perceive in a new light their role in Nkrumah's foreign policy designs. As was argued in Chapter 4, the crisis acted as a catalyst on the political consciousness of the army. For two leading protagonists in the 1966 coup, the Congo experience aroused considerable interest in Ghana's domestic politics;¹¹ while Michael Otu, one of the most senior African officers, described the affair as part and parcel of a defence policy which "appeared to be determined in terms of prestige or in relation to some wild, political ambitions, rather than anything else."¹² It should also be remembered that the Congo operations affected Ghana's internal security situation since it diminished the availability of troops for deployment at home.

The beginning of a marked deterioration in Nkrumah's relations with the army was not only evidenced by adventures abroad. A series of events with regard to the armed forces thereafter led to a growing distrust and fear for the future on the part of the officer corps. In contrast to the 1957-1960 phase when the security forces relied much more heavily on the West, the period after September 1961 was characterised by a radical change in Nkrumah's military policies as Ghana turned increasingly to the socialist states for aid. The clearest signal concerned training facilities in the Soviet Union for Ghanaian officers.

Before their forced departure, Alexander and his senior staff already knew of the provisional undertaking to send cadets to the USSR. In mid-1960, following a request from Nkrumah, a Soviet military mission arrived in Accra. Within months, it produced a report criticising British training methods and offering to provide training facilities in Moscow. During Nkrumah's tour of Eastern Europe in the summer of 1961, the offer was renewed. General Alexander was ordered to select 400 cadets for training in Russia, a demand he strongly resisted as representing "a long-term threat to Nkrumah's own position."¹³

Nevertheless, on 10 October 1961, less than a month after the British officers' departure, seventy-six cadets were flown to Moscow to be trained as army, naval and air force officers. Most of these had previously been rejected for Teshie as a consequence of their inadequate educational and personal qualifications (and that was at a time when entry standards had already been lowered to permit an output of 120 officers a year). According to one reliable source, "When the places were advertised, it was put as 'abroad;' most thought it meant the UK or maybe India. When they found

out, many applicants changed their minds."¹⁴ Several cadets came home almost immediately. The remainder completed their courses, returning home in January 1963. Approximately half of these were again rejected by the service selection boards but these recommendations were overruled by the presidential office. Eventually, sixty-eight of the original seventy-six were absorbed into the three services after retraining. Before the end of 1964, many of the Soviet-trained Ghanaians had been reposted to form the officer core of the Presidential Guard.

Nkrumah's decision to diversify sources of military education assistance should be seen, firstly, in terms of his wider foreign policy objectives which have already been examined. By utilising Soviet training facilities at a time when the British JSTT was still employed in Accra, Nkrumah was able to demonstrate Ghana's non-alignment. Equally important, the Moscow-trained officers provided a pool of personnel for the establishment of an ideologically reliable alternative to the regular army. Unlike the Africans schooled in the British professional tradition, these men had been indoctrinated in the Soviet model of "apparatus" control.

One result of these moves to counterbalance Western influence was the introduction of yet another source of cleavage into an army already beset with organisational strain. As one officer commissioned in 1960 put it: "What confusion this would generate in discipline and attitude never bothered Nkrumah"¹⁵—a view expressed even more cogently by Alexander in a letter to Ankrah. It was written on 22 September 1961, the day Alexander was dismissed:

It is unwise for several reasons. Firstly, it splits the training and outlook of the officers into two camps, and can breed neither contentment nor efficiency. Secondly, I consider that such action may in the long-term prove dangerous to the President himself.¹⁶

Once again, considerations of a political nature had outweighed more prudent military factors, thereby diluting principles of achievement in favour of ascriptive norms. Dual standards of admission to the officer corps had been introduced and training patterns had been split. Both these departures from established practices delivered yet another blow to the standards previously demanded by the British military authorities. What is more, Alexander's predictions of the dangers inherent in these moves were, in the event, to prove correct.

Further cause for alarm was the domestic use made of the security forces by the CPP. As the government became more unpopular (see the section on local reaction to the coup in Chapter 10), so the army and police were increasingly used as instruments of coercion to protect the regime. Gingyera-Pincywa and Ali Mazrui have written that all African states have the kinds of internal divisions for which the military will be required.¹⁷ But many armies are often clearly reluctant to be used to coerce the ruling party's domestic opponents. This is because their training usually predisposes them to regard external defence as their legitimate function and not police-type

duties, despite the fact that in Africa there is likely to be a greater need for internal security operations than for external ones. Such an outlook is tied up with the military's tendency to see itself as a servant of the state rather than of a particular government. It is especially the case where the government begins to become more authoritarian and repressive. For example, in Nigeria, the army's antagonism to the political class was increased by the use made of the military to provide a show of force, as in Tiv Division in 1960 and the Western Region in 1965-1966.¹⁸

In Ghana, many officers (especially Gas and Ewes, for reasons explained later in the chapter) similarly resented the political use made of the army for suppressing popular unrest.¹⁹ During the period 1957-1966, both army and police were enlarged substantially, the army from 5,700 to 14,000, the police from 6,000 to 13,500.²⁰ The police service was divided into nine regional commands (ten from 1964) with Special Branch elements attached to each. Every region had a security committee made up of senior army and police officers under the CPP regional commissioner. Military Intelligence and the police Special Branch searched for subversion, not least any efforts by opposition groups to use soldiers in their schemes, as had been attempted unsuccessfully in 1958.

September 1961 saw the start of the railway and dock workers' strike in the Sekondi-Takoradi area.²¹ As the stoppage began to assume national proportions in mid-month, troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Barwah were used in a heavy and successful display of force in Accra. After this operation, Barwah appears to have been particularly trusted by Nkrumah. Not long afterwards, on 1 October 1962, he was appointed temporary brigadier and given command of the strategically important First Infantry Brigade. In 1965, he was made army commander. And of all the regular officers, Barwah was the only one to be involved in the secret training camps for African guerrillas run by the Bureau of African Affairs.²²

Earlier in this study, it was suggested that some advantages might stem from the recruitment of soldiers from ethnic and regional groupings least likely to be involved in violent demonstrations. It can be conjectured that Barwah, being a northerner, would have had less qualms than most of his southern colleagues about suppressing rampaging crowds in Accra and other coastal towns. The job would also have been facilitated by the predominance of northern infantrymen in the ranks. It will become clear as this chapter unfolds that, through careful attention to the ethnic/regional background of his officers, Nkrumah attempted to cultivate the loyalty of his forces—especially in the rival formations created in the early 1960s.

The coincidence of the ending of the strike and the dismissals of Alexander and his British staff reflected both Nkrumah's largely unwarranted conviction that the presence of expatriates might be an impediment to his government's freedom to deal with any future upheaval as well as his confidence of increased Eastern bloc assistance. But the next two years were characterised by a marked deterioration in the domestic security situation. In this respect, the most noteworthy developments concerned attempts on *Osagyefo's* life.

On 1 August 1962, after a lull in a series of bomb explosions that rocked Accra during the last few months of 1961, an assassination attempt was made on Nkrumah. Returning from Tenkodogo in the bordering republic of Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta), the president stopped at the northern village of Kulungugu where he narrowly escaped death in a hand-grenade attack. Several people were killed. One of these was Superintendent Kosi, a bodyguard. Fifty-seven others, including the president's ADC, Captain Buckman, were injured. Nkrumah himself received minor shrapnel wounds in the back.

Six weeks later, on 18 September, a Ga army warrant officer, Sergeant-Major Edward Tetteh, who was in charge of the Burma Camp ammunition depot and was suspected of providing grenades for the Kulungugu plot, jumped, or was pushed, to his death from a fourth-floor window whilst under interrogation at police HQ. His alleged complicity threw suspicion on the army but no further evidence emerged after his fall.

A further spate of five bombings against Nkrumah occurred between September 1962 and January 1963; however, none of them came near to success. In these attacks, more than a dozen people were killed and over 400 hurt. However, the identity of those responsible was never discovered. The immediate consequences of these events was a tightening up of security measures throughout the country far exceeding those following the 1966 coup. The government's restrictions were taken one step further on 23 September 1962 when, following simultaneous bomb blasts in Accra and Tema, a state of emergency was declared. The army was given widespread emergency powers, conducting house-to-house searches for weapons, ammunition and explosives and manning a blockade of the capital until 1964. Over 500 persons were imprisoned under the terms of the 1958 Preventive Detention Act; and in January 1963, public meetings were banned.

Despite the clampdown, these measures failed to prevent another serious assault on the president, this time not from an anonymous figure in a public place but from a policeman in the grounds of Flagstaff House. On 2 January 1964, an armed constable with four years service, Seth Ametewee, fired several close-range rifle rounds at Nkrumah before being overpowered by his police colleagues. Yet another unfortunate bodyguard was killed; this time it was the head of a special police guard, Assistant Superintendent Salifu Dagarti. Nkrumah's only injury was a bite on the cheek received whilst wrestling his would-be killer to the ground.

There is some evidence to suggest that Ametewee, who was hanged in 1965 for the murder of Dagarti, was in the pay of senior police officers who had him specially posted to Flagstaff House with promises of £2,000 and further education overseas if he did the job.²³ At about the same time, news leaked to the press revealed another unsuccessful plot, on this occasion involving the officer in charge of the police band. The bandleader's plan apparently involved shooting Nkrumah with revolvers when he came over to congratulate the musicians on their performance.

Whatever the truth about the Kulungugu and Flagstaff assassination attempts, the events convinced Nkrumah that both the army and the police

harboured potential, if not actual, sources of opposition. The resulting purge of the police command, together with the reassignment of security responsibilities to National Security Service agencies, reflected one of the central dilemmas of Nkrumah's personal rule: how to protect the regime whilst simultaneously preventing the security forces from gaining too much power.

Almost immediately, a major reorganisation of the police force was implemented.²⁴ Within a week, Nkrumah's Krobo commissioner of police, Erasmus Madjitey, a former schoolteacher and the first Ghanaian to head the police (in 1961), Assistant Commissioner Samuel D. Amaning, Superintendent M.K. Awuku and seven other senior officers were dismissed from the service. Several of these, including Madjitey and Amaning, were served with Preventive Detention Orders and imprisoned at Nsawam Medium Security Prison. They were not released until 24 February 1966. Mr J.W.K. Harlley, head of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), was promoted to fill the top post. It was from this position two years later that Harlley, suspicious that his own tenure of office was threatened, inspired and organised the army-police coup against Nkrumah.

The police force was disarmed, the special police guard at Flagstaff House was dissolved and responsibility for Nkrumah's personal security was transferred from the police to the Presidential Detail Department (PDD). On 1 October 1964, Special Branch was severed from police control; it was transplanted to Flagstaff House and put under the direction of Ben Fordjoe, a personal civilian appointee of the president. Also removed from the police to the office of the president was the sensitive border guard.²⁵

These disciplinary actions, and Nkrumah's increasing use of informers within the service, caused considerable consternation. Police morale sank to a low ebb. Even officers who had benefitted from the changes were afraid of the future, as one man who was promoted in 1964 from assistant commissioner to commissioner of police (Administration) explained in an interview.²⁶ Overall, the president's actions had the effect of removing from the police force many of the security and surveillance functions previously performed by them. The measures—which mirrored the parallel hierarchies and dual structures of command established in the military—were important in alienating the police and activating their support for the coup.

The National Security Service

Nkrumah's growing paranoia about his personal safety was evidenced by an increased insularity from the public and frequent dabbling in magical practices for protection against enemies.²⁷ On a more practical level, the president had already begun to construct a complex civilian-military security machine with the help of Eastern bloc advisers.

The Security Service Act of 1963 grouped intelligence and special military bodies into several departments within one National Security Service. Administratively, it was exclusively at the disposal of, and directly responsible

to, the president. Organised from Flagstaff House, it was totally independent from the regular armed forces and the police. For the most part, its elements were trained in Moscow or by East European specialists in Accra.

Under NSS control came Military Intelligence (Department 3) which had originally been set up by Alexander as a small army branch but expanded after the British left in late 1961. Prior to 1960, there was no Military Intelligence body as such, but only a small number of intelligence officers (commanded by Major E.H.C. Davies between 1958–1960) attached to army headquarters and the battalions. After Africanisation, it was not part of the Ministry of Defence as its name would imply. Instead, it was organised in such a way that, while not severed altogether from the regular army, it was integrated in the security machine run from the presidential office. Its task was to make an independent check on the loyalty of personnel in the three regular armed services. For this purpose, it maintained an interrogation centre located—as it still is today—within high white-washed security walls inside Burma Camp.

The first Director of Military Intelligence was M.M. Hassan who had been commissioned as a major at the age of thirty-eight in September 1960. He was promoted to lieutenant-colonel twelve months later and to colonel on 1 January 1964. Very little was known about his background, except that like Nkrumah he was an Nzima from the western coastal region of Ghana. Hassan spoke Arabic and Hausa much better than English, having spent most of World War II in Nigeria and the Sudan. It seems that he had been a captain in the Sudanese military before being commissioned into the Ghana Army on the instructions of Flagstaff House. According to one report, he put on an outward appearance of joviality but he felt thoroughly out of place in the officers' mess and was seldom seen there. The same source, who claimed that Hassan was profoundly disliked in the army, said the vigilance of intelligence personnel inspired great care in the army:

In those days you had to be very careful about complaining. Things could be blown up out of all proportion. Military Intelligence was very strong—we had to be extremely careful. In conversation over a glass of beer, we'd talk generally if we saw an intelligence chap or someone else around. This secrecy was very bad for morale.²⁸

Such a view was endorsed by a subsequent chief of Military Intelligence: "People felt that other officers were spying on them. But intelligence work should not be seen to be done overtly. It was a serious mistake."²⁹

There was also a Special Intelligence unit, established early in 1963 and directed by Ambrose Yankey, also an Nzima. This body initially employed a number of officers from Special Branch (which became Department 2 when it was hived off from the police in 1964). At the time of the February 1966 coup, Yankey had recruited some 280 security officers (including his son, Ambrose Yankey Jr., as his deputy), many of whom were officially classified as Informants Grade I or Informants Grade II. These individuals,

both men and women, were trained in undercover surveillance techniques by two Soviet agents, Nicholai Gladkiy and Robert Akhmerov. Special Intelligence's function was to check on the political activities of civilians in order to uncover plots and indications of dissensions against the CPP among individuals and groups that were not covered by other intelligence organisations. Spies were placed everywhere, in factories, offices, shops, public transport, political rallies and in beer and *akepeteshi* bars.³⁰

Department 1, the Presidential Detail Department, had overall responsibility for the personal safety of Nkrumah. Its head was another civilian, Eric Otoo. The PDD had three main components: a civilian bodyguard, a counter-intelligence section and the President's Own Guard Regiment. Yankey's Special Intelligence network was not part of the PDD, though the two organisations worked together closely.

The bodyguard was composed largely of ex-servicemen trained and supervised by Cuban specialists. Emphasis was placed on small-arms handling, physical fitness and hand-to-hand combat. Housed in new flats directly across the road from Flagstaff House, its members were the personal bodyguards who preceded Nkrumah on trips, mingled with crowds and frisked suspicious individuals for weapons.

As its name signifies, the role of the Soviet-trained counter-intelligence unit was to check on the loyalty of all PDD members and to prevent that organisation from being penetrated by elements hostile to the regime. However, it was resentment against the third component of Department 1, the Guard Regiment, which contributed most to the growing chasm between Nkrumah and his regular military forces. Because of this, the origins and development of the Guard will be examined in some detail.

The President's Own Guard Regiment

In 1960, a decision was taken to form a company of Guards from older soldiers who had become unfit for field duty and for relief for units rotated from service in the Congo. Established largely as a ceremonial force to guard Flagstaff House and visiting dignitaries, it was raised on 1 October and had attached to it a saluting troop of three light field guns. The Guard helped to free Ghana's three infantry battalions for the Congo operations, while it exercised the further task of controlling the administration of military transitees in Accra.

The concept of the Guard Regiment originated in the office of the British CDS where plans had been drawn up to expand the formation into a small battalion of four rifle companies consisting in all of 600 men. There were no plans to separate it from the regular army. Apart from one incident, when General Alexander successfully disputed Nkrumah's wish to teach the Guards the goose-step shortly before Queen Elizabeth's official visit to Ghana in 1961, there was no controversy about the size or functions of the formation.³¹

Three months after its foundation, the company of Guards was redesignated the Presidential Guard Company, its size being supplemented a

year later (in February 1962) by the addition of a band and a motor-cycle escort. By this time, the formation was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel David Gbon Zanlerigu, a northerner (Fra-Fra) and the last officer, it will be remembered, to be commissioned before Independence. In October 1961, Zanlerigu had been sent to Moscow to take a special internal security course.

Following the unsuccessful Kulungugu assassination attempt in August 1962, Nkrumah ordered that the Guard be expanded again (this time to battalion strength) and its name restyled the President's Own Guard Regiment. But it was Constable Ametewee's abortive attack that convinced Nkrumah of the need for an even more powerful alternative security force. At the end of 1964, therefore, the Ministry of Defence was told to establish a second POGR battalion. The additional battalion was accordingly raised and trained under Soviet supervision at Bundase; but at the time of the coup, only two companies (then barracked at Afienuya) had been formed. By February 1966, however, the POGR consisted of fifty officers and 1,150 men,³² while skeleton plans for enlarging the Guard into a President's Own Field Regiment consisting of anything between three and five battalions had reached the ears of regular army officers.³³ The POGR came under the aegis of the PDD in early 1963; however, it was not officially detached from army command until July 1965. As will be seen, this caused major complications in the military chain of command.

Even before the Guard was officially severed from the army, the duplication of security forces was responsible for serious problems in command and control. It was no longer possible to rely on established norms of hierarchy and discipline. A simmering hostility developed between the Presidential Detail Department (especially the POGR section) and the regular forces. Occasionally, the tension burst into blazing rows between the commander of the Guard Regiment, who maintained that he took orders direct from the C-in-C (Nkrumah), and the Chief of Defence Staff, Stephen Otu, who protested that an army cannot have two chains of command.

On one occasion, Zanlerigu refused to pay compliments to the CDS. The consequence was a letter from Otu to the president which merits extensive reproduction here because it conveys, at first hand, the flavour of Otu's dilemma:

I have, during the past month, on several occasions had talks with the CO of the POGR on the matter of compliments to be paid me by Guards of Honour generally on the occasions that I attend parades or ceremonies in connection with visits of VIPs. . . . I consider that the CDS must continue to be given this honour because in a country where there is only one Major-General it does not look nice in the public eye for him to be ignored completely by troops on parade. . . . On the departure of Premier Chou En-Lai at the Airport on 16th January, 1964, despite my instructions to CO POGR, I was completely ignored by the Guard of Honour, much to my embarrassment. When I confronted him for an explanation of his action he said that he was acting on orders from Flagstaff House. . . . I depend on

someone unknown in the Flagstaff House to give orders to the POGR and sometimes even to me. The result is that coordination is lacking and the discipline of the POGR is, I am afraid, rapidly declining. I have observed a tendency in the personnel of the POGR to ignore officers outside the POGR.³⁴

Alexander's warning—that the existence of parallel officer hierarchies trained in different traditions (one British, one Soviet) would eventually lead to a breakdown of those disciplinary and command patterns that the British had long hoped would be established in Ghana—was coming true. The wrangling over protocol failed to reduce the ambiguity of army-POGR relations; and although the Guard remained under nominal army command for a further eighteen months, the regular officers did not have to wait until July 1965 to calculate Nkrumah's motive for splitting the military establishment. The president was quite happy to encourage rivalries between competing groups of officers, hoping in this way to discourage them from taking united action against him.

As the Guard was gradually strengthened (mainly with Soviet equipment including armoured cars, field artillery, high velocity AK-47 rifles and special uniforms), a growing sense of grievance and deprivation permeated the regular forces. Supply shortages and the deterioration of equipment were blamed on the favourable treatment accorded the Guards. By December 1965, one officer has written, many of the regular troops were without equipment and clothing, "things essential for [their] pride, morale and efficiency;" there was an acute shortage of accommodation "due to the rash military expansion scheme that Kwame Nkrumah had launched;" and the army "were also aware that members of the President's Own Guard Regiment were receiving kingly treatment."³⁵

An editorial published in a service journal on the second anniversary of the coup also explained the condition and mood of the regular forces in such terms: "As officers and enlisted men, we moved about shame-facedly in tattered and patched uniforms."³⁶ The article also pointed out that wireless sets, transport and other equipment were diverted to arm a "private army" (the POGR) and to aid "spies at subversive camps."³⁷

Interviews with army officers in 1974 and 1975 corroborated the picture of spreading disaffection among officers as revealed in the available published sources already cited. Colonel L.K. Kwaku, a captain at the time of the coup, explained that there was no money left for the army by 1964: "training was at a standstill. . . . All the emphasis was on the POGR, while the rest of the forces suffered."³⁸ One Sandhurst-trained officer, an active participant in the anti-CPP rebellion as a major in command of the Second Battalion, had this to say: "Psychologically, the Guard had to be given preferential treatment to look after Nkrumah, but the regular army was neglected. . . . The POGR was an empire within an empire and Zanlerigu was a boss in his own right."³⁹ Colonel E.A. Yeboah, the second officer to be commissioned into Supply and Transport and later an NLC member, told the author that as chief transport officer in 1965 he was in a good position to compare regular army and POGR transport facilities: "There

was just no comparison. The Guard was well-equipped, whereas almost everything we had was off the road. We were always below 40 percent of establishment. . . . The troops were very badly off and they were complaining."⁴⁰

Politicisation of the Military and Inter-Service Rivalry

The state of general unease and insecurity among regular officers was also related to Nkrumah's emphasis on the need for ideological education of all citizens, including personnel in the armed forces. This period was also characterised by heavier imposition of CPP power and an insistence upon identification of party with state. The process quickened in February 1961 when the president opened the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Ideological Studies at Winneba. The aim was to produce party stalwarts well-versed in the CPP's somewhat ill-defined brand of "scientific socialism"—"Nkrumahism."⁴¹

At the same time, to counteract the Western bias in the training of the army and to secure his officers' loyalty, Nkrumah embarked on a policy to commit his officers to the regime. The president was not content to encourage his soldiers in the apolitical tradition of the British Army. For him, such a model of civil-military relations clashed diametrically with his vision of a one-party state encompassing the national institutions of Ghana. What was required were committed armed forces, schooled in the subjective method of control, who owed loyalty not only to Ghana, but also to the CPP and Osagyefo personally. In this context, Western traditions of political detachment and neutralism become meaningless and are replaced by an ethos in which enthusiasm for the existing regime becomes an essential quality in a military officer.⁴²

Therefore, in mid-1962, Defence Minister Kofi Baako issued a directive that party education would shortly be introduced into the army through an Armed Forces Bureau. Current affairs and government policies would be discussed and some officers would be sent on extended courses at Winneba. These plans were temporarily shelved as a result of opposition from the General Staff; but in June 1964, the idea was renewed. This time the order was issued straight from Flagstaff House and it included a new plan to introduce political commissars into the army. CPP application forms were issued and sent to all army units and a branch of the party was opened at the Teshie Military Academy.

In fact, muted opposition from the officers—encouraged, it should be added, by the inevitable sluggishness of the bureaucratic process in launching the scheme—ensured that the directive had not been enforced by the time of the 1966 coup. According to Afrifa, who complained that the CPP had for a long time "made a steady assault on the Army with a determined programme to indoctrinate it," he and many other officers simply refused to fill in the party forms "on the principle that the Army must be above

party politics."⁴³ Having previously been instructed by their British officers to steer clear of politics, "the idea of 'Party' education was received with some apprehension . . . everything possible was done by the Armed Forces to stem the tide of political infiltration."⁴⁴

Concomitant with Nkrumah's plans to introduce a crude ideology and party politics into the armed services, came efforts to create additional countervailing forces. While the military was being politicised, civilian political organisations of the CPP, the Ghana Young Pioneers (GYP) and the Workers' Brigade, were militarised. Secret plans also existed for the establishment of a peoples' militia.

The Ghana Young Pioneers, inaugurated in June 1960, was the only officially recognised youth group in the country. Headed by Mr A.B. Shardow, the GYP was consciously patterned on the Soviet *komsomol* schools with the task of training "the mind, the body and soul of the youth of Ghana" and "to inculcate into the youth Nkrumahism."⁴⁵ Several hundred members were sent on courses and summer camps to Moscow, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In May 1963, Shardow was summoned to Flagstaff House to discuss a plan for using the Pioneers in a new National Service Training Scheme. The scheme never materialised, but it was seen by the army as a threat in what appeared to be a concerted plan to relegate it to a minor role.

Changes in the Workers' Brigade attracted even greater suspicion. Created in 1957 to mobilise political support for the CPP and to provide work for the unemployed, the Brigade had grown to 6,000 in mid-1958 and to 17,000 seven years later. Originally, it was controlled by a civilian under the umbrella of the Labour and Cooperatives Ministry. Preference was given to ex-servicemen; however, it was not then in any sense a military organisation.

But after the British officers left Ghana in 1961, Nkrumah turned the Brigade into a para-military force and several of its senior officials were posted to East Germany for training. It was placed under MOD control, and in 1963 its civilian head was replaced by an army officer, Captain Musa Kuti. Aged only thirty-five at the time of his appointment, he had joined the army in 1946 and had been commissioned in March 1958. Most significant of all was the fact that Kuti—like Nkrumah's other most trusted army officers, Barwah and Zanlerigu,—was a northerner. Immediately after the January 1964 Flagstaff House assassination attempt, Kuti was promoted from captain to lieutenant-colonel, the Brigade was transferred to the office of the president and military training was intensified.⁴⁶

The final manifestation of Nkrumah's security policies in this regard was the president's decision to activate an earlier plan for the formation of a militia. The catalyst for action was Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence in November 1965. On 25 November, Nkrumah asked the parliament for authorisation to form the new body:

Mr Speaker, Members of the National Assembly, if a cry for help comes to us from the victims of oppression in Southern Rhodesia, we, the African states, must answer it. It is for this reason that the National Assembly is

being asked tomorrow to enact legislation to give the government power to prepare for any military eventuality. . . . Already the first steps in this direction have been taken. Members of the armed forces who have completed their time of service are being retained in the forces. As a precaution all military leave has been stopped. Under existing law we are going to establish a militia.⁴⁷

The next day, the National Assembly unanimously passed the African Defence (Ghana) Bill under a certificate of urgency giving legal status to the militia. Nkrumah's speeches had a familiar echo: they resonated with his passionate appeals for African unity in the heat of the Congo crisis. The CDS was sent on a mission to obtain Organisation of African Unity (OAU) support for an invasion of Rhodesia; but there was never any likelihood of joint African action and the dilapidated state of Ghana's regular services ruled out any possibility of unilateral measures against the small but well-equipped Rhodesian forces.

Nevertheless, the army was quite convinced that they were to be sent to fight someone else's war, a prospect which, in the light of the Congo experience, had very little appeal as one officer told this writer:

Things came to a head towards the end of 1965 when it was announced that we were going to Rhodesia to fight. We all thought it was a mad idea. There was talk of an African High Command; but what should we be doing in Rhodesia? We have enough problems in Ghana. It was then that people started agitating for a change on the quiet.⁴⁸

Trepidation arising from Nkrumah's continental aspirations was matched by a deeper fear that the army was gradually being squeezed out of existence. The build-up of alternative security services, and the militarisation of civilian organisations, were correctly construed by the army officers as counter-weights to neutralise the power of the regular forces. For Afrifa, the Workers' Brigade was seen as a "storm-trooper organization and the instrument of Kwame Nkrumah's growing desire to turn [Ghana] into his private domain"⁴⁹—a view paralleled by another officer in his reference to the POGR: "In all this plan to build a second Army one thing stood out prominently, and that was a plan to strangle the Regular Army to death."⁵⁰

Well before February 1966, the establishment of alternative security formations led to intense competition for funds and inter-service rivalry. Agencies of Nkrumah's National Security Service, particularly the Guard, benefited at the expense of the army; and rumours (confirmed after the coup) that money was being diverted to equip guerrillas trained in secret camps, added to the army's frustration.

This sense of corporate deprivation was compounded by the loss of a number of material perquisites. After 1961, the National Defence Council (a civilian-military body established in 1957 to regulate terms and conditions of service) was simply ignored and various fringe benefits were eliminated or curtailed without consultation. Out-of-station allowances were terminated, rent for officers' housing was increased, travel and training allowances were

reduced and, for the first time, officers had to pay for their electricity. Since the revised salary structures of the armed forces had been introduced in 1960, the retail price index for Accra had risen by 53 percent.⁵¹

Further Changes in the Army Hierarchy

Nkrumah further demoralised the officer corps by abrupt changes among senior military personnel. As with the formation of a whole network of competing controls, the juggling of appointments in the regular army was concerned with ensuring the regime's safety and minimising the chances of a coup. As will be seen, ethnic factors, together with considerations of ideological reliability, played a part in the reorganisation of appointments to the critical commands.

On 28 July 1965, Major-General Stephen Otu, the cigar-smoking CDS, and his deputy, Major-General Joseph Ankrah (who had been promoted from brigadier on 1 May 1964), were summarily dismissed from the army. As with the expulsion of expatriate officers four years before, the dismissal of the two highest-ranking military chiefs was both unexpected and sudden. Only a few weeks earlier on Armed Forces Day, the president had decorated both men with the Order of the Volta, Ghana's highest national honour.

Speaking at Burma Camp, Accra, a fortnight after the coup, Ankrah, (by then chairman of the NLC and a lieutenant-general) claimed that he and Otu were removed because they had protested against the detachment of the POGR from the army.⁵² This explanation is generally endorsed in the published accounts of the period but it is not confirmed in this study.

There is some evidence to suggest that the two generals were involved in conspiratorial conversations against the regime in 1965. Two officers, both active participants in the 1966 coup, informed the writer that Commissioner of Police Harlley, in collaboration with Lieutenant-Colonel Kotoka, had twice approached Otu and Ankrah with plans to oust Nkrumah.⁵³ According to these sources, a plot to arrest the president in April 1965 and charge him with crimes against the state failed to materialise due to the mutual suspicion of the generals. Both officers feared betrayal by the other.

The possibility of an army-police operation against the regime was discussed again at the end of May. A plan to arrest the CPP leadership during Nkrumah's June absence from Ghana at the London Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference was drawn up. However, Otu apparently lost his nerve at the last moment and the plot vaporised. Although Military Intelligence got wind of trouble, Colonel Hassan was unable to determine the identity of the collaborators. In the event, the dilemma was resolved when Nkrumah decided that the safest course of action was to dismiss his generals and replace them with officers he considered loyal. From then until the coup, the generals' houses were kept under twenty-four hour surveillance by security men from Yankey's Special Intelligence branch.

In the subsequent reshuffle, Brigadier Nathaniel Aferi, who had been commander of the Second Brigade since its formation in October 1962,

was promoted major-general and appointed CDS; the First Brigade commander, Lieutenant-Colonel (temporary Brigadier) Barwah, was appointed deputy CDS and given command of the army as a substantive brigadier. Lieutenant-Colonel E.K. Kotoka, who had only recently (in April 1965) been appointed Director-General, Operations and Plans, was given the Kumasi-based Second Brigade; and Lieutenant-Colonel A.K. Ocran, who had been responsible for the formation of the Takoradi-based Sixth Battalion as its first commander from April 1964, took over the First Brigade in Accra. Both Kotoka and Ocran were made temporary colonels.

Although some army officers felt that Aferi and Barwah were too closely identified with the CPP regime (soon after his appointment, Aferi had summoned his subordinate commanders to a special ceremony at which he presented Nkrumah with a general's baton;⁵⁴ while Barwah had been considered Nkrumah's special military confidant since the Sekondi-Takoradi strike of 1961), their appointments to the top military posts did not, in fact, infringe hierarchical norms. As the fourth most senior black army officer (after Otu, Michel and Ankrah) at the time of Independence, and the only Ghanaian to have been selected for the stringent Joint Services Staff Course at Latimer in Buckinghamshire before 1966, Aferi's elevation to CDS was perfectly in consonance with considerations of seniority and aptitude. Barwah's meteoric rise through the military hierarchy was also based on strict adherence to criteria of seniority and professional competence. He was the first Ghanaian to be selected for RMA Sandhurst (where, out of 200 cadets, he passed out fourth in the order of merit) and, having completed the Staff College course at Camberley in 1960, he was personally picked out in July 1961 by General Alexander for promotion to lieutenant-colonel after serving only fourteen months as a major.

However, the selection of brigade commanders was a different matter altogether. Since Kotoka was the most senior of the two, he should have been appointed to the strategically-located First Brigade. However, Ocran was preferred and Kotoka was given the less prestigious post in Kumasi. In fact, Ocran ought not to have been chosen for brigade command at all since he was himself outranked by two Ga officers, Lieutenant-Colonels C.C. Bruce and A.A. Crabbe.

When asked to interpret this apparent anomaly, one (Ga) officer retorted that Nkrumah distrusted Crabbe in particular and the Ga community in general.⁵⁵ The president's suspicions probably dated from the Awhaitey affair which, as discussed in Chapter 5, involved prominent Ga and Ewe leaders who had merged with several opposition groups to form the United Party. Nkrumah's misgivings would certainly have been compounded by the 1962 Kulungugu assassination attempt (after which a Ga sergeant-major was arrested) and the Flagstaff House shooting incident (which involved a Ga police constable).

After Kulungugu, three leading Ga CPP politicians (Ako Adjei, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tawiah Adamafio, Information Minister and general secretary of the CPP, and Coffie Crabbe, CPP executive secretary) were

dismissed from their posts and detained on grounds of their supposed part in the plot.⁵⁶ And as far back as November 1958, thirty-three members of the Opposition—nearly all Ga—were detained under the Preventive Detention Act and charged with forming a subversive organisation known as “Zenith Seven” whose members had allegedly planned to kill Nkrumah.⁵⁷

Suspicion of Ga army officers was certainly heightened by coup rumours circulating in the capital at the end of 1964. In his book, Afrifa claimed that in November of that year he approached Lieutenant-Colonel Crabbe, commander of the First Battalion at Elmina, with a proposal to use Crabbe’s troops in a quick dash for Accra. Crabbe apparently sounded out some of his officers but the matter was reported to Military Intelligence. The Ga officer was picked up for interrogation in January 1965 but he was later released.⁵⁸ Six months later, the “unreliable” Ankrah (to use Nkrumah’s own adjective) was dismissed from active service.⁵⁹ He, too, was a Ga.

According to one army interviewee already cited (note 55), these developments caused considerable anxiety among Ga officers who felt that the CPP was denying them opportunities for advancement. Such fears were not confined to Gas; many Ewe officers also believed that, henceforth, appointments and promotions would increasingly be a function of political and ethnic factors.

The Ghanaian officers who had been trained by the British had little in common with the CPP’s radical orientation. They harboured a subdued distaste for Nkrumah and his party machine and many of them were loathe to be actively involved in suppressing opposition groups with whom their sympathies lay. In Table 3.3, the extent to which Ga and Ewe officers were over-represented in the Ghana Army at Independence (seventeen, or 58 percent, of the twenty-nine Africans were from these groups) was demonstrated. During the early 1960s, this dominance declined but only marginally. Thus, of the twenty-eight officers in the rank of major and above listed in Table 6.1, nine were Ga and five Ewe. Together they accounted for half the top army command. It can be conjectured, therefore, that the opposition of leading politicians from these two communities to the CPP government encouraged the alienation from the regime of many senior officers.⁶⁰ And to anticipate one finding from the next chapter, nine of the eleven army conspirators recruited by mid-February 1966 belonged to one of these two ethnic minorities.

One final point should be clarified at this juncture. One observer has written that Nkrumah developed a comprehensive programme to redress the ethnic imbalances in the army officer corps and ranks. In his essay on Ghana’s Army, Bayo Adedokun states that diversification measures were introduced “so that dominant groups were allowed some numerical increases, but their representation decreased in proportion to other groups whose representation was consciously promoted.”⁶¹

There is no evidence to sustain this assertion. Variations in the army’s ethnic composition did occur after Independence, but they were related to improvements in the image of the military, expansion of the armed forces

and Africanisation; they had nothing whatsoever to do with a considered policy of correcting inherited imbalances. This is not to say that Nkrumah ignored such factors where it concerned appointments to the crucial military commands. Quite apart from the Ga issue discussed in the preceding few paragraphs, this chapter has taken note of Nkrumah's discrimination in favour of two ethnic/regional groups, especially in the alternative security services established to protect the regime from the army. All four of them—the Guard Regiment, Military Intelligence, the Workers' Brigade and Special Intelligence—were controlled by northerners or Nzimas. And Brigadier Barwah, a Dagomba Muslim, commanded the army.

Divide et Impera

When the British officers were superceded by Ghanaians in 1961, the CPP's most reliable security safeguard disappeared with them. Before that date, the presence of expatriates acted as an effective check on internal subversion, not least from the army itself; with their expulsion, that guarantee of military subservience to the civil power no longer existed. The inherited format of objective civilian control became redundant because it relied, in the first place, on the presence of Europeans who had insufficient time to train their protégés in their own image. In Paley's view, had the transitional period been more flexible, an autonomous military professionalism should have eventually taken root. There were, to be sure, some signs of successful institutional transfer in this respect, but the structural dislocations of precipitous Africanisation (described in the previous chapter) destroyed the delicate fabric of civil-military relations imported from Britain.

Whatever the arguments about the ease or otherwise of grafting alien military traditions on to new states, the withdrawal of the British guardians generated widespread insecurity for the regime. Concern for his personal safety in the wake of Kulungugu and the bomb explosions in 1962 largely explain Nkrumah's decision to develop an alternative strategy for the armed forces. The hallmark of his approach was the adoption of the subjective or "apparat" model of control in which the military forces would become an integral wing of the CPP.

The new system to organisationally neutralise the security forces through an amalgam of ethnic-related and functional techniques was characterised by five interrelated features: diversified foreign military training programmes, the development of rival security formations to the orthodox armed forces, political indoctrination of servicemen, the creation of comprehensive intelligence services and much closer party involvement in the appointment of reliable officers to sensitive commands. It was the CPP's expectation that these innovations would institutionalise party superordination over the military.

The decision to send cadets to the USSR was the most radical departure from established practice. Until October 1961, Ghanaian officers had not trained outside the Commonwealth;⁶² after that date, not only were officers

being educated in Moscow but also personnel from the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and other socialist states were responsible for training programmes in Ghana. As Chapter 4 sought to show, the original purpose of diversification was to further Ghana's commitment to positive neutralism and African unity. By the time of the coup, however, the division of training and supply operations between Western and Eastern powers was largely concerned with inhibiting threats from like-minded units within the military. Multiple dependency had become one instrument in Nkrumah's arsenal of internal control.

Welded to this mechanism of aid diversification was a policy of divide and rule. The suspicion that the army and police were implicated in plots against his life caused Nkrumah to turn for his protection to new units, important sections of which were under the control of communists. Almost all of these forces came under the Presidential Detail Department, the most important component being the POGR. Intended as a direct counterbalance to the regular army, the Guard Regiment was detached from the Ministry of Defence and its officers specially groomed for loyal service to the regime.

President Nkrumah's plan also called for the implementation of a more conscious pattern of CPP control over the armed forces. This involved ideological education of officers in an attempt to integrate them in the direction of a single-party regime and identify them with the orientations and purposes of the government. The selection and manipulation of loyalist officers to whom sensitive military responsibilities could be safely entrusted was a logical consequence of the subjective model of control.

The most obvious manifestations of Nkrumah's personal security machine, in which trusted individuals were given charge of the most important forces, were the predominance of Nzimas from the president's own ethnic group (the Yankey father and son team and Hassan) and Muslim northerners (Barwah, Musa Kuti and Zanlerigu). Indeed, an analogy may be drawn between Nkrumah's practice in this respect and the British preference in colonial times for northerners who were recruited from areas least likely to be involved in strikes and other forms of internal dissent.

The final method of controlling and supervising the armed forces was the establishment of an intelligence network which included surveillance of all influential military and political figures considered potentially dangerous to the regime. Controlled from the presidential office, this intelligence system was independent of the regular military establishment.

To summarise the above, the argument here is simply that, with the departure of the British officers, Nkrumah's insecurity forced him to adopt an entirely new format of control. Because he could not trust the army and police forces inherited at Independence, he orchestrated a programme of diversification in which new security organisations were formed and existing ones split up. Furthermore, the creation of a National Security Service supports the point that responsibility for the maintenance and defence of the regime was removed from the orthodox forces and relocated in the office of the president at Flagstaff House. Nkrumah deliberately

encouraged rivalry between the units of the dual security system that emerged with a view toward controlling all.

Elsewhere in Africa (for instance, in Ben Bella's Algeria, in Modibo Keita's Mali and in Congo-Brazzaville under Massemba-Debat), attempts to establish alternative armies have been fiercely resisted by the regular forces.⁶³ While a number of factors have been identified in explaining the widespread discontent existing within the Ghanaian Army by 1966, there seems to be little doubt that Nkrumah's efforts to stem the emergence of internal military power by building up guards to guard guards was the most vital background feature to the coup. More than any other development, it was the fear of being squeezed out of existence that united the army officers against the regime.⁶⁴

That the experiment in subjective control failed was probably largely a question of time. In retrospect, it appears that Nkrumah made three mistakes: he failed to penetrate the army sufficiently, he underestimated the alienation from the regime of his regular officers and, most important, he failed to develop the Presidential Guard rapidly enough to neutralise the army. By 1964, it was clear that there was a real danger that the only institution capable of challenging Nkrumah by force would soon lose its effectiveness, largely because of the assembly of forces capable of countering it.⁶⁵ In the final analysis, the formation of an alternative security system, and the decision to disconnect the POGR from the army command, was counter-productive. In February 1966, the army and police overthrew Nkrumah shortly before his personal security apparatus threatened to become effective.

Notes

1. The 1960 plebiscite and election are analysed in D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.387-395.

2. *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* (Accra: Government Printer, 1960), Article 54. Article 54 goes on to state that the C-in-C "shall have power in a case where it appears to him expedient to do so for the security of the State, to dismiss a member of the Armed Forces or to order a member of the Armed Forces not to exercise any authority vested in him as a member thereof until the Commander-in-Chief otherwise directs; and a purported exercise of authority in contravention of such an order shall be ineffective."

3. A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), pp.7-8.

4. *Ibid.*, p.8.

5. W.F. Gutteridge, *The Military in African Politics* (London: Methuen, 1969), p.100.

6. For instance, during one debate in mid-1962, the CPP member for Denkyera, F.E. Tachie-Menson, warned that "Experience in some countries has taught us that Heads of some Armed Forces usually make an attempt to stage a coup." *Parliamentary Debates* (Accra: Government Printer, 11 June 1962), Vol.27, cols.691-692.

7. S.P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), Chapter 4; M. Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967), Chapters 1 and 3; S.E.

Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall, 1962), Chapter 4.

8. But as Finer has noted (*The Man on Horseback*, p.25), the problem here is that the army might accept the formula, then distinguish between the good of the state and the performance of a particular government. Professionalism may then actually lead to armed intervention. See, too, Janowitz (*The Military in Political Development*, pp.63-67), whose discussion on the subject underlines the narrow and "essentialist" definition of professionalism expounded by Huntington.

9. In short, Huntington argues that "Subjective civilian control achieves its end by civilianizing the military, making it the mirror of the state. Objective civilian control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tools of the state." *The Soldier and the State*, p.83. For a more extensive treatment of this pattern variable as applied to Ghana, see V. Plave Bennett, *The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Ghana: 1945-62*, Boston University, Ph.D dissertation, 1971, especially Chapter VII; and S. J. Baynham, "Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes?: The Case of Nkrumah's National Security Service," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, 1 (March 1985), pp.87-103, and "Divide et Impera: Civilian Control of the Military in Ghana's Second and Third Republics," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, 4 (December 1985), pp.623-642.

10. In his study of the civil service during the CPP era, one Ghanaian convincingly argues that a similar process occurred with regard to the civilian bureaucracy at national and lower levels. B. Amonoo, *Politics of Institutional Dualism: Ghana, 1957-1966*, Exeter University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1973.

11. A.A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), pp.66, 72; and Ocran, *A Myth is Broken*, p.6.

12. *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 4 (June 1968), p.10. When the article appeared, Otu was GOC, Ghana Armed Forces.

13. H.T. Alexander, *African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (London: Pall Mall, 1965), p.92.

14. Interview, Mr W.W. Stallybrass, 31 March 1980.

15. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, p.109.

16. Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p.147.

17. A.G.G. Ginyera and A.A. Mazrui, "Regional Development and Regional Disarmament," in F.S. Arkhurst (ed.), *Arms and African Development: Proceedings of the First Pan-African Citizens' Conference* (New York: Praeger, 1972), p.36. See, also, A.L. Adu, *The Civil Service in Commonwealth Africa* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), p.214.

18. See C.E. Welch, "Praetorianism in Commonwealth West Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10, 2 (January 1972), pp.215-216.

19. As revealed in numerous articles written by officers after the coup, such as that by "Na-ly," "Effective Re-appraisal Suggested," *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 2 (July 1967), pp.24-25.

20. *The Ghana Police 1966* (Accra: Ghana Police Headquarters, 1966).

21. The course of the strike, which represented a major crisis for the regime, has been extensively documented. The best two studies are by S.C. Drake and L.A. Lacy, "The Sekondi-Takoradi Strike, 1961," in G. Carter (ed.), *Politics in Africa: Seven Cases* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966), Chapter 3; and R. Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology in Ghana: the Railwaymen of Sekondi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Chapter 5.

22. See note 37.

23. G. Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), p.130.

24. Details from R. First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat* (Harmondsworth: Penguin African Library, 1970), pp.195-196; and E.W. Lefever, *Spear and Scepter: Army, Politics and Police in Tropical Africa* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1970), pp.74-79.

25. Neither Special Branch nor the border guard was disarmed. According to a naval source, one major function of the border guard was to facilitate frontier crossings by Nkrumah's "freedom fighters." To aid operations, four Soviet patrol vessels were attached to the border guard rather than to the navy. With Russian crews, these armed vessels cruised the Gulf of Guinea and carried arms to opposition groups in nearby countries. Interview, Lt.-Commander J. Nkrumah, 6 February 1974.

26. Interview, Inspector-General of Police J.H. Cobbina, 6 May 1974.

27. The psychological effect of the assassination attempts on Nkrumah has been described in Genoveve Marais's memoir, *Kwame Nkrumah As I Knew Him* (Chichester: Janay, 1972), Chapter 6. For an analysis of the relationship between personal paranoia and dictatorial behaviour, see, too, G. Kennedy, *The Military in the Third World* (London: Duckworth, 1974), pp.85-86. There is ample evidence that Nkrumah frequently had recourse to soothsayers and fetish priests—especially the services of Kankan Nyame, a fetish priest of Guinean origin, and Madam Akuah Oparebea, the chief priestess in Akonodi at Larteh. See, for example, *West Africa*, 18 June 1966; and *Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1967).

28. Interview, Lt.-Colonel C.K. Enninful, 11 August 1975.

29. Interview, Lt.-Colonel I.K. Akuoku, 21 August 1975.

30. *Nkrumah's Subversion in Africa* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1966), pp.i, iv. While the language of this propaganda publication put out by the NLC soon after the coup is somewhat virulent, the data, according to numerous military and political interviewees, is clearly factual.

31. Alexander, *African Tightrope*, p.99. After Alexander left Ghana, the goose-step, complete with knee-length jack-boots, was introduced into the Guard.

32. Interview, Major B.B. Lorwia, 13 August 1975.

33. Interview, Brigadier D.A. Asare, 22 April 1974.

34. The letter was drafted for Otu by Lt.-Colonel Ocran, commander of the First Brigade at the time of the 1966 coup. The contents of the message are reproduced in full in Ocran's book, *A Myth is Broken*, pp.31-32.

35. "Their pay was higher and it was an open fact that they possessed better equipment. . . . Naturally the relationship between the POGR and the Regular Army was far from cordial." Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, pp.100-104.

36. *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 3 (February 1968), p.2. Another article published in the July 1967 issue of the same journal (p.24) paints a similar picture.

37. The background to the establishment of these camps was noted in Chapter 4. The Bureau of African Affairs, secretly known as the Special African Service and itself part of the National Security Service, was responsible for training Africans from many states in guerrilla warfare. Taught by Soviet, Chinese and Cuban instructors, these men were used for espionage and other subversive activities throughout the continent in Nkrumah's efforts towards the achievement of a united Africa. See *Nkrumah's Deception of Africa* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1967); and A. Clayton, *Soviet Military Aid to African Countries* (Unpublished paper delivered to RMAS seminar, 23 March 1972), p.10.

38. Interview, 5 August 1975.

39. Interview, Brigadier D.A. Asare, 22 April 1974.

40. Interview, 14 April 1974.

41. The vacuity of "Nkrumahism" is amply demonstrated in the president's own address to the first seminar at the Winneba Institute in February 1962: K. Nkrumah, *Guide to Party Action* (Accra: Government Printing Department, 1962). See, also, his *Consciencism* (London: Heinemann, 1964), and *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Nelson, 1965).

42. A view expressed most succinctly by the former Tanzanian leader, Nyerere: "Our conception of the President's office is obviously incompatible with the theory that the public services are and ought to be politically impartial." *The Observer*, 3 June 1962.

43. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, p.99.

44. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken*, p.38.

45. Nkrumah's *Subversion in Africa*, p.49. Further details are given in E.P.A. Schleh, "The Post-War Careers of Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6, 2 (June 1968), p.210.

46. After the coup, substantial evidence emerged to the effect that Kuti had done very well out of the job through wage frauds, unauthorised payments to himself, selling foodstuffs belonging to the Brigade and illegally loaning machinery to business friends. R. Rajkumar, *Political Corruption in Ghana, 1951-66*, Exeter University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1974, Chapter 4.

47. *Parliamentary Debates* (Accra: Government Printer, 25 November 1965), Vol.59, cols.473-485.

48. Interview, Colonel L.K. Kwaku, 5 August 1975.

49. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, p.86.

50. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken*, p.37. Commissioner of Police J.W.K. Harlley made a similar allegation a fortnight after the coup: "Nkrumah had wicked plans to disband the Ghana armed forces and replace them with a militia formed by his CPP fanatics." *Daily Graphic*, 11 March 1966.

51. From 100 (March 1960) to 153.4 (February 1966). 1965-1966 *Statistical Year Book* (Accra: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1969), p.143.

52. *West Africa*, 19 March 1966.

53. Interviews, Brigadier D.A. Asare, 22 April 1974, and Brigadier A.K. Kattah, 23 May 1974.

54. The general told this writer that he gave Nkrumah a baton in order to obtain better treatment for the army, not to cement army-CPP relations. Interview, Major-General N.A. Aferi, 15 February 1974.

55. Interview, Colonel R.E.A. Kotei, 9 April 1974.

56. The immediate grounds of suspicion against the men were that they hung back and kept away from Nkrumah as the procession of cars approached Kulungugu, whereas previously they had clung to the president "as if they were his lovers." Mr F.E. Tachie-Menson in Parliament, quoted by Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p.410.

57. For further details of Ga opposition to the CPP against the perceived exclusion of the indigenous population of Accra from good jobs in the capital, see Austin, *ibid.*, pp.374-377, 384.

58. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, p.96.

59. K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p.34.

60. This argument is developed in Chapter 8.

61. J. 'Bayo Adelson, "Army in a Multi-Ethnic Society: The case of Nkrumah's Ghana, 1957-1966," *Armed Forces and Society* 2, 2 (Winter 1976), p.259.

62. Although Israelis had trained air force technicians at the Air Force Trade Training School in 1959-1960.

63. Ben Bella's efforts to strengthen his power base by the formation of a peoples' militia in mid-1965 was clearly a major determinant in Colonel Houari Boumedienne's coup of June 1965. In Mali, the young subalterns led by Lieutenant Moussa Traoré, who seized power in November 1968, were motivated by a desire to clip the wings of Keita's popular militia. And in Congo-Brazzaville, Captain Ngouabi's coup in 1968 was largely a response to the creation of the Cuban-trained *Mouvement National de la Révolution*.

64. The actual extent of officer collaboration in the coup constitutes an important part of the materials in Chapter 9.

65. Gutteridge, *The Military in African Politics*, p.105.

8

The Army and Police Collaborators: Primordialism and Peer Groups

During the eight months immediately prior to the February 1966 coup, several African states had experienced military takeovers. In June 1965, a Revolutionary Council headed by Algeria's Minister of Defence, Houari Boumedienne, ousted President Ben Bella in a bloodless coup; and in November, General Soglo intervened for the second time in Dahomey (Benin) in which President Apithy and Prime Minister Justin Ahomadegbé were displaced. During the same month, Mobutu also staged his second coup by deposing Kasavubu in Congo-Kinshasa (Zaire) and proclaiming himself president. On New Year's Day 1966, President David Dacko's regime in the Central African Republic was toppled by Colonel Jean-Bédel Bokassa; while only three days later, President Maurice Yameogo's regime was unseated and replaced by a military government headed by Colonel Sangoule Lamizana. Less than a fortnight later, a *coup d'état* initiated by young officers led to the installation of Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi as Nigerian head of state.

In addition to these instances of political violence, there had already been three successful cases of army intervention in post-colonial Africa: Egypt (1952), Congo-Kinshasa (1960) and Dahomey (1963), as well as a veritable rash of abortive military uprisings and mutinies in Algeria, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, Tanganyika (Tanzania), Togo and Uganda. And early in 1966, successful military coups took place in other parts of the Third World: in Bolivia (January) and in Syria (February).

It is impossible to gauge the precise significance of these upheavals on the mood of the Ghanaian officer corps. Certainly it was transparently clear to many soldiers that the survival of the existing political *status quo* in numerous "developing" states depended upon the political disposition of the armed forces. In particular, the tumultuous events taking place in Nigeria at the beginning of the year were of great interest to Ghana's officers who frequently compared their position with that of their comrades-in-arms further along the Gulf of Guinea. (On one occasion in July 1975, the present writer was enjoying cocoa and groundnuts in the officers' mess at the Ministry of Defence when the news of General Murtala Muhammed's

assassination was announced. Within minutes, normal duties at Burma Camp ground to a halt and the rest of the working day was spent in animated conversation huddled around the wireless waiting for further broadcasts on Nigerian developments.)

Moods are more difficult to describe and classify than motives. But if the mood to intervene is largely governed by a sense of overwhelming power (as well as by some kind of grievance) as *Finer* maintains,¹ then there can be little doubt that the political activities of other African armies had at least *some* influence on the disposition of the military to pit sword against sceptre in Ghana.

Several officers said that, following the first Nigerian coup, a sense of unreality and expectancy permeated the battalion messes with some subalterns occasionally plucking up enough courage to announce that "It will be our turn next." Such remarks were invariably delivered with a nervous grin and greeted with long peels of noisy laughter—often a sure sign of discomfort and embarrassment among the Ghanaian educated elite.

Officers who played both predominant and peripheral parts in Nkrumah's ouster also told of the pressure that was building up from the soldiers under their command. Within the rank-and-file, an atmosphere of restlessness and impending drama began to prevail. One officer, who was at the centre of operations on the night of 23/24 February, related the story of a conversation he had with his driver. The corporal reported that the soldiers had been discussing the likelihood of a military takeover for some months; and since the events in Nigeria, they had been waiting impatiently for "our coup."²

Not surprisingly, the growing proclivity towards armed intervention in Africa caused considerable consternation within the leadership of the CPP. Addressing the National Assembly soon after the January coup in Nigeria (and only a fortnight before his own overthrow), Nkrumah referred to the "unfortunate military incursions into the political life of several independent African states," warning that "it is not the duty of the army to rule or govern because it has no political mandate."³ This echoed his theme at the Teshie Military Academy five years earlier when the president told the cadets:

You must have confidence that the Government is doing what is best for the country, and support it without question or criticism. It is not the duty of a soldier to criticise or endeavour to interfere in any way with the political affairs of the country; he must leave that to the politicians, whose business it is. The Government expects you, under all circumstances, to serve it and the people of Ghana loyally.⁴

Nkrumah was acutely aware of the potential threat posed by his own army; and he was constantly being reminded of that danger by the Director of Military Intelligence, Hassan. It was for this reason, as the previous chapter sought to demonstrate, that alternative security services were developed to neutralise the regular military establishment's power. However,

these measures helped to precipitate the very event they were designed to prevent.

This chapter is exclusively concerned with the origins and subsequent development of the conspiracy to topple Nkrumah and his CPP party machine. The collaborators who were actually responsible for the coup numbered eighteen in all. Two of them were policemen; all the others were regular army officers. As will be seen, it is possible to distinguish three distinct levels of complicity in the planning of the rebellion.

At the crest of the conspiratorial pyramid was the inner body of decisive planners and coordinators who numbered five in all. Included in this group were the two key personnel from the police and the army, Commissioner Harlley and Lieutenant-Colonel Kotoka. The next echelon in the edifice, the intermediate group, consisted of four men with at least six months prior knowledge of the coup. All of these were to play important roles in the operations, one of them as a battalion commander, another in his strategically-important capacity as Director of Logistics at the MOD and two of them in providing most of the mutineers' munitions. At the foot of the conspiratorial structure was a third tier of active subordinates—the outer circle of nine army collaborators—who were not brought into the picture until February 1966, in most cases just a few hours before operations began. One of these was Lieutenant-Colonel Ocran, commander of the First Infantry Brigade Group located in Accra.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the plot was that the original impetus came, not from the military, but from the police service, a situation almost unique in the politics of new states.⁵ The general unpopularity of the police force—a consequence of its position as a major instrument of control in Ghana, often brutal and overwhelmingly corrupt—severely limited the chances of success for any unilateral action on its part. Hence Commissioner of Police Harlley's approach to the army. However, it was not until the recruitment of a senior army officer that the plan was given any real momentum. For once Kotoka had committed his combat units to the plotters, the successful seizure of power seemed possible.

Of great significance, not only in the plot but also on the internal cohesion of the armed forces after the coup, was the ethnic coloration of the collaborators. The figures responsible for ending Nkrumah's fifteen years in office came mainly from one ethnic grouping, the Ewe. Only late in the day were non-Ewe officers apprised of the plot. This is not to say that the major motivation behind Nkrumah's overthrow was "tribalistic," but rather that the leadership was essentially homogenous in ethnic terms, an obvious advantage in conditions of conspiracy.

Quite apart from demonstrating parallelisms in social origin, this investigation also reveals other distinct similarities in the rebels' background—in education, in military training and in career experiences, both in the ranks and as commissioned officers. What is important of course is the interpretation given to the evidence. Thus, on the basis of the empirical data catalogued here, it will be argued that ethnicity and peer group solidarity

provide the two key concepts in unlocking the tangled web of intrigue that occurred during the twenty or so months prior to the coup.⁶

The Conspirators: The Inner Circle

The individuals who actually initiated the February 1966 coup appear to have begun their plotting some time early in 1964 when John Kofi Harlley, Commissioner of Police, and Deputy Commissioner of Police Anthony Deku, decided to approach a number of army colleagues they believed trustworthy. By the end of the year, an inner circle of conspiracy had come into being consisting of the police chiefs, Lieutenant-Colonels Kotoka and Kattah and Captain Kwashie. Close examination of these and other officers' backgrounds provides the basis for a new interpretation of the internal dynamics of the army-police coup.

Nkrumah's commissioner of police was born in May 1919 at Akagla in what was then administered by France and Britain as a mandated territory. After an education at the Presbyterian school in Anloga and at Accra Academy, Harlley became an interpreter, first at a district magistrates court and later in the Supreme Court, before enlisting in the Gold Coast Police Force just a week before his twenty-first birthday in 1940. He rose through the ranks to become an inspector (by November 1952) and he was selected for training at the British Metropolitan Police College at Hendon a year later when, in preparation for Independence, several African police officers were sent to Britain and promoted to assistant superintendent on their return. In 1960, he was appointed assistant commissioner of police (Special Branch), a post he retained until he was moved to head the Criminal Investigation Department in mid-1963. In the drastic reorganisation of the police force immediately after the Flagstaff House assassination attempt, Harlley was again promoted, this time to fill the top police post vacated by the disgraced Erasmus Madjitey.

Harlley's first known collaborator was Anthony Deku who was born in 1923 at Hedzranao, near Denu, in the Volta Region. After attending the Roman Catholic Mission School at Denu (1930-1939), he joined the police six days after Harlley in 1940. In April 1953, he was commissioned as an inspector. One year later, he left for England to train at Hendon; by 1960, he had reached the rank of chief superintendent as Harlley's deputy in the Special Branch. He was appointed chief of the CID and promoted to deputy commissioner when Harlley moved to head the police service in January 1964.

Early in 1963, the two men discussed the possibility of arresting Nkrumah and forcing him to abdicate for breaching the 1962 Public Property and Corrupt Practices Act. However, the impracticability and hazards of this "constitutional" road to mutiny, without the back-up of troops, caused the policemen to explore alternative avenues of action.⁷ The 1963 scheme, and the subsequent intrigues involving Generals Otu and Ankrah in a plan to oust Nkrumah (noted in the previous chapter), did not result in much

serious planning. There was, certainly, a real desire to see the president deposed, but a single continuous thread of conspiracy linking the 1963 and 1965 plots to the 1966 *coup d'état* can not be readily identified.

Developments toward the February 1966 action can be traced to the police chiefs' decision to contact Captain Francis Kwashie, a tubby little officer who was secretary of the Korle Bu Military Hospital in Accra. He was requested to make soundings amongst his army colleagues about their attitude to the CPP regime and the probable reaction of the officers to a coup. An Ewe and a close friend of Deku's, Kwashie was born in Fiahor in 1922 (he never knew in which month), joining the army in 1945. After fourteen years in the ranks, he was commissioned into the Medical/Dental Service (non-medical) as a full lieutenant in May 1959 and promoted to captain in April 1962. In his turn, Captain Kwashie approached Lieutenant-Colonel Kotoka. The two army officers had known each other since their boyhood days at the junior and senior Presbyterian schools in Anloga (although Kwashie was more than three years senior to Kotoka) and had joined the Gold Coast Regiment within two years of one another.

Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka, who was also born at Fiahor, began his education at the Alakple Roman Catholic Mission School before moving on to Anloga.⁸ After working as a teacher in Torve and completing his goldsmith's apprenticeship at Keta, he enlisted in the Education Service in July 1947. Having finished the cadet course at Teshie, he was sent to Eaton Hall in June 1954 and commissioned as a lieutenant six months later. After five years commissioned service, Kotoka returned to England to do a company commander's course at the School of Infantry from whence he joined his unit (the Second Infantry Battalion) in the Congo. When Nkrumah dismissed his British officers in September 1961, Kotoka was given the Second Battalion and promoted to lieutenant-colonel. It was in this command, on his third tour of duty in the Congo, that he won the DSO. In July 1963, he was appointed Quartermaster General at the Ministry of Defence, the post he held until his appointment as commander of the Second Brigade in August 1965. It was Kotoka who introduced the fifth member of the inner circle, Lieutenant-Colonel Alphonse le Sage Kattah, to Harlley, Deku and Kwashie.

Kattah, a retired brigadier with an impeccable Oxford accent and a beautiful villa in the suburbs of Accra when this writer knew him in the mid-1970s, appears to have been involved in almost every major plot and coup since Ghana became independent in 1957.⁹ An Ewe and a Catholic, he was born near Aflao in August 1932, joining the army in 1950. Following officer training at Teshie (in 1955) and Eaton Hall (1955-1956), he was commissioned into the Infantry as a lieutenant in February 1956. Two years service in Tamale was followed by an attachment early in 1958 to the Boys' Company at Kumasi. It was during this appointment that his name cropped up in connection with the Awhaitey incident. He was subsequently promoted to major in September 1961 and to lieutenant-colonel at the beginning of 1964. At the time of the coup, he was Adjutant General and one of the few Ghanaian officers to have done a staff college course. As well as being

a good friend of Kotoka, Alphonse Kattah was also close to Captain Kwashie with whom, a few years later, he was planning a coup operation against Kofi Busia's Second Republic when Colonel Acheampong seized power in January 1972.

The inner circle of conspirators shared much in terms of background and education. All five officers came from poor farming and fishing families in the economically backward area of the Trans-Volta; and only one of them (Harley) had attended secondary school. As was noted in Chapter 3, the Ewe were disproportionately overrepresented in the officer corps during the period under review, reflecting the fact that a career in the security forces was considered an attractive proposition for the offspring of Ewe peasant families. A career in the civil service or one of the established professions was virtually ruled out to such individuals, but the police and the military did provide a possible path of upward mobility to intelligent but poor and under-educated school-leavers. To a considerable extent, then, the inner group of five shared an upbringing in the traditional sector of the state and a career and aspirations in the modern administrative sector of the economy.

Shared training and career experiences undoubtedly reinforced the sense of solidarity already provided by a similar childhood background. All five had joined the army or the police during the colonial period and had served in the ranks for several—and in the case of the policemen for many—years before their selection for officer training. Kotoka and Kattah had served in the rank-and-file for six and five years respectively, starting their officer training at Teshie and then continuing at Eaton Hall in England. They were commissioned into the Infantry as full lieutenants within fourteen months of one another, Kotoka in November 1954 and Kattah in February 1956. Both men had benefited from accelerated promotions: Kotoka became a lieutenant-colonel after less than seven years as an officer, while Kattah was promoted to the same rank with under eight years commissioned service. At the time of the coup, the two officers were lieutenant-colonels. Although he spent many years in the ranks, Kwashie had also gained from the decision to expand the army after Independence when he was selected for officer training and a commission in 1959. On top of this, he was one of Kotoka's closest friends and confidants.

There was also a close correlation between the career experiences of the police officers. In fact, their backgrounds in this regard were almost identical. Harley and Deku enlisted in the colonial police force as constables (class 3) within a few days of each other in 1940. Both were selected for advance training at Hendon Police College after a dozen years in the ranks. Deku was commissioned as an inspector five months after Harley. The officers had known each other for many years during their service in the ranks and later worked intimately together on a daily basis in Special Branch between 1960–1963. Their work with Special Branch and the CID meant that they were closely involved with the CPP government and well-acquainted with the state surveillance and security apparatus.¹⁰

The Conspirators: The Intermediate Group

By December 1964 or January 1965, the inner circle of two policemen and three army officers seems to have been complete; but the plot did not blossom further until September 1965—a few weeks after Kotoka was appointed commander of the Second Infantry Brigade Group. It will be recalled that this followed the July dismissals of Generals Otu and Ankrah.

From the time of his appointment to Kumasi Brigade HQ, Kotoka played a pivotal role in the development of the conspiracy and the eventual execution of the coup. His command experience with the Second Battalion, and his administrative competence at the Ministry of Defence, had already earned him his colleagues' respect. And the fact that he had served in the ranks and made a name for himself in action (after his exploits in the Congo, the soldiers called him *Dziekpe*, an Ewe word for "the courageous one") had also gained him the goodwill of the rank-and-file. He shared the professional grievances of his fellow officers and he was particularly unhappy about the burgeoning influence of the National Security Service operating from Flagstaff House.

Kotoka also harboured a separate personal grudge: he had been passed over as First Brigade commander in the August 1965 reshuffle. As the most senior of the two officers, Kotoka should have been allocated the post but, instead, Ocran was chosen. In November, Kotoka's uneasiness about his career prospects under the regime was again highlighted when Hassan accused him of a deliberate plan to transfer Ewes into the Second Brigade, thereby turning it into an Ewe stronghold. When Kotoka complained to Brigadier Barwah, the allegation was withdrawn. But it was apparently common knowledge that Kotoka did not get on with either Hassan or Barwah. In his account of the coup, Afrifa disclosed that he felt Kotoka was about to be removed from his command and replaced by an officer more ideologically attuned to the regime.¹¹

Unlike Kwashie and Kattah, who held administrative posts at the hospital and the Ministry of Defence respectively, Kotoka's appointment was of crucial consideration in the rebels' calculations. As commander of the Second Brigade, Kotoka controlled the Tamale-based Third and Fifth Battalions as well as smaller units in Kumasi. He also commanded the incipient Parachute Battalion which was in the process of formation, also in Tamale. For a variety of reasons, therefore, the choice of Kotoka was ideal.

It was Kotoka who was responsible for the recruitment of the next echelon of collaborators. Between September and October 1965, four army officers, Lieutenant-Colonels Amenu and Tevie, Major Dedjoe and Captain Avevor—all Ewes—were enlisted in the cabal.¹²

Amenu was born in Accra in 1929 and educated at the Evangelical Presbyterian School at Peki Blengo in the Volta Region. After completing his middle school education in 1945, he enlisted in 1947, reaching the rank of company sergeant-major in 1951. In 1954, he was selected for officer training at Teshie and the following year he went to Eaton Hall. Commissioned

as a full lieutenant on his twenty-seventh birthday, he was sent for further training at the Support Weapons Wing at the Warminster School of Infantry, England, in 1960. He commanded Ghana's Fifth Battalion in the Congo, being promoted to major in September 1961 and to lieutenant-colonel in January 1964. At the time of the coup, Amenu commanded the Sixth Infantry Battalion based at Takoradi, a post he had held since July 1965.

When Nkrumah dismissed his British officers in 1961, Lieutenant-Colonel Clement Tevie became Director of Ordnance Services. At the time of the coup, he was Director of Logistics at Burma Camp. He joined the Boys' Company at the age of fifteen in 1943, but was discharged two years later at the end of the war.

He re-enlisted in 1949, obtaining his commission as an Infantry lieutenant in August 1956 following training at Teshie and Eaton Hall. During the trial of Captain Awhaitey in 1959, Tevie's name constantly cropped up in court; there were rumours at the time that he (like Kattah) was implicated in an Ewe plot to overthrow Nkrumah.

Born in 1917 and commissioned in 1958 after many years service in the ranks, Major Dedjoe was the oldest officer in the army and the most senior man on the General (QM Branch) List. As Kumasi Garrison Quartermaster, he was pulled into the plot to ensure that weapons and ammunition were readily available when required. He was born in the same village as Kotoka—hardly surprising in view of the fact that Dedjoe was his uncle.

Captain Avevor was born in Keta in March 1923, enlisting in the Gold Coast Regiment in 1947. He eventually obtained his commission as a lieutenant in 1962, when the normal criteria for the selection of officers was in a state of temporary suspension. When he was brought into the plan in September, Avevor was Dedjoe's deputy at Kumasi.

As with the inner core of rebels, these four officers were all Ewes (see Table 8.1) with origins in the coastal region of eastern Ghana. And as was the case with Kotoka, Kattah and Kwashie, they had also gained commissions after service in the ranks. With the exception of Dedjoe, all the army officers had joined up between 1945–1950, three of them (Kotoka, Amenu and Avevor) in 1947.¹³

As may be seen in Table 8.2, the seven army officers were all Teshie-trained. Four of them had also been educated at Eaton Hall. Two of these, Kattah and Amenu, had trained together at Teshie and were in the same intake at Eaton Hall. They were commissioned on the same day in February 1956. Kotoka was commissioned only a short while before these two, while Tevie was commissioned only six months later. The four lieutenant-colonels had all done well from the accelerated promotions prompted by Nkrumah's decision to complete Africanisation in 1961. Two (Kattah and Amenu) had served as officers for only sixty-seven months before reaching the rank of major, while Tevie had served for only sixty-one. And although Kotoka took eighty months to get to major, it took him only an additional two months to reach lieutenant-colonel. It is also interesting to note that the three officers commissioned in 1956 (Kattah, Amenu and Tevie) were all

TABLE 8.1
COMPOSITION OF THE FEBRUARY 1966 CONSPIRATORS

Name	Rank ^a	Command	Age	Comm- ission	Training ^b	Ethnic origin
J.W. Harlley	Com.of Police	Police Com.	46	Nov. 52	Hendon	Ewe
A.K. Deku	Dep.Com.	Dep.Police Com.	43	March 53	Hendon	Ewe
F.K. Kwashie	Captain	Sec. Mil.Hospital	43	01.05.59	ROSTS	Ewe
E.K. Kotoka	Lt.-Col.	CO 2nd Brigade	39	20.11.54	Eaton Hall	Ewe
A.K. Kattah	Lt.-Col.	Adjutant General	33	11.02.56	Eaton Hall	Ewe
D.C.K. Amenu	Lt.-Col.	CO 6th Battalion	37	11.02.56	Eaton Hall	Ewe
C.K.T. Tevie	Lt.-Col.	Director Logistics	37	25.08.56	Eaton Hall	Ewe
E.N.N. Dedjoe	Major	QM Kumasi	48	22.07.58	ROSTS	Ewe
A. Avevor	Captain	Dep.QM Kumasi	42	01.11.62	ROSTS	Ewe
A.A. Afrifa	Captain	2nd Brigade Major	29	22.07.60	RMAS	Ashanti
I.A. Ashitey	Major	CO Kumasi Garrison	36	11.02.56	Eaton Hall	Ga
J.T. Addy	Lt.-Col.	CO Tamale Garrison	39	04.06.55	Eaton Hall	Ga
V. Coker-Appiah	Major	CO Engineers	32	01.08.58	RMAS	Fanti
A.K. Ocran	Lt.-Col.	CO 1st Brigade	36	20.11.54	Eaton Hall	Fanti
L.A. Okai	Major	CO 4th Battalion	31	16.12.55	RMAS	Akwapim
D.A. Asare	Major	CO 2nd Battalion	32	19.09.57	RMAS	Ashanti
R.J. Dontoh	Captain	CO Recce Regiment	36	21.03.58	RMAS	Fanti
R.A. Achaab	Captain	Dep.CO Recce Reg.	29	22.07.60	RMAS	Dagomba

Sources: As for Table 6.1.

^a Ranks are based on the seniority dates utilised by the army and not on temporary or acting positions which in the case of several army officers was one rank higher.

^b As at 24 February 1966, all those trained at Eaton Hall and RMAS had done a preliminary course at ROSTS. The RMAS officers had also done a short course at Mons.

TABLE 8.2
TESHIE, EATON HALL, MONS AND SANDHURST MONTHS OF 1966 COUP FIGURES^a

Name	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
E.K. Kotoka	Jan 54 Dec 54 *****-----						
A.K. Ocran	Jan 54 Dec 54 *****-----						
A.K. Kattah		Mar 55 Feb 56 *****-----					
D.C.K. Amenu		Mar 55 Feb 56 *****-----					
J.T. Addy	Jul 54 Jun 55 *****-----						
C.K.T. Tevie			Oct 55 Aug 56 *****-----				
I.A. Ashitey		Mar 55 Feb 56 *****-----					
L.A. Okai	Jan 54 *****==+++++		Jul 56				
D.A. Asare		Jan 55 *****==+++++		Jul 57			
V. Coker-Appiah			Jan 56 *****==+++++		Jul 58		
R.J. Dontoh				Jan 57 *****==+++++		Jul 59	
A.A. Afrifa					Jan 58 *****==+++++		Jul 60
R.A. Achaab					Jan 58 *****==+++++		Jul 60

Sources: The Wish Stream: Journal of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (1954-1960 issues); Ghana Armed Forces Magazine (1966 issues); Daily Graphic (February-March 1966 issues); interviews with serving and retired army officers; and the author's special biographical file on the Ghanaian officer corps.

Code: *** ROSTS, Teshie; --- Eaton Hall, Chester; == Mons Officer Cadet School, Aldershot; +++ Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

^a This excludes the two policemen, who were both trained at Hendon, and the three army officers, Dedjoe, Avevor and Kwashie, who received special commissions after the short course at Teshie.

promoted to major on the same date in September 1961 and—after only twenty-seven months—to half colonel on the same day in January 1964. Finally, it should be recorded that Major Dedjoe and Captains Kwashie and Avevor also benefited from the parallel programme of military expansion and indigenisation described in Chapters 4 and 6: it was only due to exceptional circumstances, therefore, that these three individuals received commissions at all.

From the brief sociological materials offered above, it is beginning to become clear that, once again, similarities in background and shared training and career patterns were of major importance in the developing mosaic of conspiracy. The labyrinthine criss-crossing of careers at school, in the ranks, as officer cadets and, subsequently, as commanding officers in Ghana and on active service in the Congo, acted as a powerful bond in uniting the collaborators.

These sources of mutually reinforcing solidarity were sustained by the integration of peer groups of the same rank (the four lieutenant-colonels), or approximately the same rank (the police officers on the one hand or the major and two captains on the other), and by numerous networks of friendship—both within the two groups of army and police officers and between these groups, as well as between what have been categorised as the inner and middle cells. Friendships were frequently forged before the nine officers entered the forces; however, they would have been additionally cemented by the tendency of military organisations to emphasise internal solidarity in the officer corps as a whole as well as at different levels of the hierarchy. The foregoing analysis has attempted to illustrate how the conspiratorial group developed around the interstices of domestic and foreign training academies and subsequent career experiences.¹⁴ But these events have yet to be fully related to one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the clique—that is to its ethnic exclusiveness.

The Ethnic Dimension: *Nsee Goro Tipen Tipen*¹⁵

Institutional solidarity is fostered by training and indoctrination which are designed to produce a unified value system in military organisations. The business of assimilation begins with the training of raw recruits, but the process does not end there. Patterns of behaviour and standards of conduct are reinforced during military service—on the parade-ground and battlefield, in the office and the mess—so that the process is an uninterrupted one. This action, whereby societal sub-cultures or institutions build themselves into our personalities teaching us specific ways of acting, feeling and thinking, is part of the socialisation process.

Those groups or institutions we value and which can therefore play an important part in moulding our identity, are referred to as reference groups. Individuals will consciously adopt those attitudes and standards of behaviour, such as styles of dress and speech and other behavioural mannerisms, which they hope will earn them acceptance by the group. And the pressures to

internalise the central norms and values of organisations are much stronger in the armed services than in most other institutions.

Military training and martial life can be viewed, therefore, as a socialisation process within which the recruit's identifications with previous civilian reference groups are displaced by new ego-involved associations that are centred on the military organisation. Thus, Price has argued that early military training and attendance at such institutions as Sandhurst, Saint Cyr and West Point should be seen in terms of their functional role in encouraging the individual to change reference group models.¹⁶

However, whilst it is clear that the socialisation process is critical to the internal cohesion of any army—despite the fact that the process may create particularistic peer group solidarities that inhibit the unity of the larger organisation in some respects—it does not necessarily eradicate soldiers' identifications with ethnic and other reference groups. Indeed, so far as the Ghana Army under the period of review is concerned, it seems quite clear that its members retained significant links with extra-military groups, a situation that has had considerable repercussions on the country's civil-military relations—not least in the dynamics of the 1966 *coup d'état*.

Merton and others have drawn attention to the importance of primary groups in the internal organisation of bureaucracies.¹⁷ With regard to military organisations, this interest has been elaborated by Janowitz and Little. They have argued that similarities in previous social experience (based on factors such as class, age and regional origins) help members of the armed forces to develop intimate interpersonal relations in their new social environment.¹⁸ One would expect such relationships to be even more important in a country where entry into the military officer corps represented a far more profound cultural and psychological leap than it would be for their counterparts in more developed and homogeneous states.

From the material presented earlier in this chapter, it is immediately striking that the nine individuals who comprised the inner and middle strata of plotters came from the same ethnic group, the Ewe. As was noted in the Introductory Preview, the Ewe—who constitute a single linguistic grouping, forming some 13 percent of the population—are much more localised geographically than any of Ghana's other groups. Although the Volta Region is to some extent ethnically differentiated (the Likpe, Santrokofi, Nkonya and Akpafu, for example, live in the area), the southern tip of the region is for all intents and purposes composed exclusively of Anlo Ewes. It is from this collocation that all nine army and police officers hailed.

This being the case, two questions immediately demand an answer. Firstly, would chance considerations alone lead one to expect Ewes to play a leading role in any group based on the middle and senior ranks of the officer corps? Secondly, since the present interpretation of the genesis of the rebellion also depends on what is made of the ethnic origins of the conspirators, can anything be said in this context about the importance of social groups in the formation of conscious or unconscious similarities in values and outlook?

As far as the first issue is concerned, there would appear to be an unambiguous significance in the ethnic composition of the rebels. This is because the proportion of Ewes in the major to lieutenant-colonel band during the 1965–1966 period was only 21 percent. Quite clearly, the overwhelming ethnic bias of the conspiratorial group in favour of Ewes—and Anlo Ewes at that—greatly exceeded chance expectations since, with the obvious exception of the two police chiefs, Ewes did not predominate in any of the ranks from which the collaborators were drawn.¹⁹

The second question, that relating to the *meaning* to be given to the ethnic profile of the rebels, requires a more cautious approach. One procedure to adopt is to begin by examining what is meant by a group and the social norms putatively shared by its members. The evidence suggests that the officers did share a common sense of identity, that this was the result of similar social backgrounds and subsequent career patterns and that their common frame of reference—rooted in the cultural, political and economic history of the Ewe people—produced uniformities of perception about Nkrumah's CPP and the fate of their people under the regime.

So far in this study, the term "group" has been used in rather a loose sense. There are, however, many types of social groupings; they vary in form or organisation, in the significance attached to them by their members and in the kind of relationships members have with one another. For Newcomb, a group is real in three senses that are important to social psychologists: socially, in the sense that it is included in the shared values which enable people to communicate with one another; objectively, in the sense that different observers can agree as to what is seen; and psychologically, in the sense that individuals perceive it and are motivated in relation to it.²⁰

For present purposes, it seems appropriate to examine the more precise term "primary group" which Coates and Pellegrin describe as characterised "by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation . . . which involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which 'we' is the natural expression."²¹ The development and persistence of the "we" feeling is obviously related to the frequency and intensity of association of persons. The longer a group of people remains together, the more numerous and deep are the personal contacts between its members.²² And the multitudinous sources of association within the inner ring of Ewe collaborators annotated above require no repetition here.

To an important degree, then, a person's conduct is influenced by the people with whom he is in daily contact. Primary groups have been found to develop norms and values of their own which lead to similarities of opinion and attitudes among their members.²³ If the social grouping comes from the same community—a congregate of people having a common culture and living within a restricted geographical locality²⁴—one would expect these norms to be more obviously evident. But what was the substance of the norms or standards of measurement bearing on perception, judgement and behaviour shared by the Ewe conspirators?

Without a much more extensive formal investigation into the attitudes and values of the rebels, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive answer to the question. There is insufficient data to answer, thoroughly, queries relating to the influence or otherwise of group norms in the development of the conspiracy. Nevertheless, several useful indicators exist that seem to have a bearing on the issue. Some of these are worth recording.

First of all, although it is invariably difficult to gauge an individual's affiliation to an objectively real or perceived group, it would appear that the shared cultural background of village life in the southeast corner of Ghana contributed to a sense of cohesion among the Ewe officers. The relative poverty of their homeland, coupled with the rather intensive mission activity in those parts from early times, has tended to make the Ewe the "Ibo" of Ghana. They are active in "modern" roles and many are compelled to sell their skills outside the Volta Region.²⁵

There is some evidence, too, of Ewe insularity in Ghana. Ewes tend to stick together and they have a reputation for being clannish—in fact, the adjective is frequently used by other ethnic groups to describe Ewes. Their language is also the one main southern tongue that very few outsiders ever master. And various studies have shown the extent to which groups of persons who speak a particular language may view themselves as different in kind from other peoples, thereby reinforcing cultural differences of another kind.²⁶

One interesting phenomenon frequently observed by this writer at army units was the tendency of officers—especially Ewes—to speak in their own language. Often this was liberally peppered with English military terminology. That this was also the case during the 1960s was confirmed by an army officer who later became a member of the National Liberation Council: "The Ewes in particular have a common tendency to talk their dialect when in a group. When the NLC met, they would always converse in their own tongue so we couldn't understand them."²⁷ During the months leading up to the revolt, such a proclivity would, of course, have facilitated communication and secrecy, factors of crucial importance in the planning and execution of a coup.

The present interpretation about the ethnic uniformity of the conspirators can be further developed by reference to the relationship of Ghana's central administration to the Volta Region. Demographically divided between Ghana and Togo as a result of the division between France and Britain in 1919 of the former German colony of Togoland and the plebiscites of 1956,²⁸ the Ewe have harboured an important base of opposition to the country's national governments since (and, indeed, before) Independence.

In 1951, the Togoland Congress was formed by the Ewe leaders S.G. Antor, Kojo Ayeke and the Reverend F.R. Ametowobla with the principal aim of intensifying the campaign for the unification of the British and French mandated territories of Togoland. The TC appealed to the Ewe sense of being economically ignored and it sought to preserve a distinctive Ewe identity through a part ethnically and part historically based irredentism

that advocated territorial separation from the Gold Coast. It was opposed in the region not only by the CPP but also by the Anlo Youth Organisation (AYO), the latter of which advocated the unification of all the Ewe including those living in the then Trans-Volta region of the Gold Coast Colony. From all reports, the CPP faced considerable opposition in the area; but in the 1954 elections, it polled approximately half of the vote (and a majority of seats) in the region. The electoral success of the CPP lay in its superior constituency organisation, the popularity and charisma of Nkrumah himself and the undiminished strength of its slogan: "Self-Government Now."²⁹

The extent of the conspirators' identification with the Ewe unification movement is difficult to determine since the officers were all members of the Gold Coast Regiment or the police at the height of pan-Ewe agitation in the 1950s. However, it is pertinent to recall that the CPP lost in 1954 (as it did again in 1956) in the three Ewe-dominated constituencies in the southern trust territory from which the nine army and police officers had their origins. It was in this area that anti-CPP sentiment was at its strongest, a situation dating back to the 1951 tax riots in which a number of people were killed.³⁰

The events of 1951 created a strong sense of antipathy toward the CPP, a fact explained and demonstrated by the victory of the AYO in Anlo South in the Ewe districts of the southeast. The successful candidate was M.K. Apaloo; later he became a prominent member of the opposition United Party, but he was arrested and detained for complicity in the Awhaitey affair of 1958. It will be recalled that Apaloo, together with R.R. Amponsah, had developed a considerable network of contacts with Ewe army officers and NCOs. The imprisonment of these two men was viewed as a direct CPP challenge to Ewe nationalism and interests. It is worth recording that Apaloo was released from Ussher Fort Prison immediately after the 1966 coup to become a member of the NLC's Political Committee and one of Kotoka's chief advisers.

In October 1961, another leading politician, Komla Gbedemah, MP for Keta and also an Anlo Ewe (although born at Warri in Nigeria), was forced to resign his post as Finance Minister, which he had held since 1954, on account of what was described as his "varied business connections." Gbedemah had been closely involved with Nkrumah since the split from the United Gold Coast Convention in 1949. He had been the architect of the party's crucial election victory of February 1951. Fearing imprisonment, he slipped out of the country and remained abroad until after the army-police *coup d'état*. His exile was regarded as yet another blow to Ewe aspirations. On his return to Ghana, Gbedemah was in close consultation with the two police chiefs (with both of whom he had for long been an intimate friend). They appeared to be intent on grooming him and his National Alliance of Liberals (NAL) for the post-NLC civilian succession.

Finally, the use made of the army and police in quelling armed mobs during the serious Volta Region disturbances immediately prior to, and during, the Independence celebrations convinced many Ewes that the region

would be punished for its opposition to the CPP.³¹ At the beginning of this study, attention was drawn to the substantial cultural and economic differences existing within Ghana. These discrepancies were highlighted, rather than eroded, by the uneven impact of modernity and education. Inevitably people of the more backward areas felt that they were being exploited by their richer neighbours. Backwardness became identified with territory and the competition for the distribution of the nation's wealth was seen, to a great extent, as lying between different ethnic groupings. Also, as Lloyd has noted, minorities frequently feel that they can never be better than second-class citizens.³² The fact that a majority of Anlo Ewes had voted against government candidates in the elections led to the justifiable expectation that allocation of development resources in the region would be less than generous.

There can be little doubt that the officers who instigated the plot against Nkrumah shared the grievances of their fellow Ewes. While the officer corps as a whole felt threatened by the administration's treatment of the regular army, the Ewe officers had additional and particular cause for concern. These anxieties were related not only to the regime's treatment of the Ewe people but also to fears, on the part of Ewe officers, that they would be amongst the first victims if Nkrumah moved against the military.

The authenticity of this conclusion is underlined, furthermore, by events occurring after the 1966 coup when the CPP was relentlessly accused by Ewes on the NLC of pursuing a vendetta against the people of the southern Volta Region. The partisan politics of these and other Ewe officers after 24 February—including one case in which an Ewe recruiting major attempted to establish an ethnic "closed shop" of Ewes in the ranks, and another involving the blatantly open support given to Ewe politicians by Harlley, Deku and Dedjoe³³—together with accusations, prior to the insurrection, of the excessively parochial mentality of the Ewe,³⁴ again suggests the importance of ethnicity in the politics of the 1966 *coup d'état*.³⁵

The Conspirators: The Outer Circle

The base of the conspiracy was broadened by February 1966 when Kotoka recruited non-Ewe officers whose support seemed essential for the successful prosecution of the coup. They were essential, firstly, because most of those enlisted commanded key military units and, secondly, because it would help to forestall the identification of the central group of collaborators with narrow ethnic and regional interests.³⁶ In chronological sequence, the following army officers were drawn into the plot: Captain Afrifa, Major Ashitey, Lieutenant-Colonel Addy, Major Coker-Appiah, Lieutenant-Colonel Ocran, Majors Okai, Asare and Dontoh and Captain Achaab. The first four were recruited before the middle of the month, the others were brought in at the very last moment.

Captain (acting Major) Akwasi Amankwa Afrifa was Kotoka's brigade major. Descendant of a long line of chiefs who had served in positions of

military command in the nineteenth century and the son of a stonemason who had been attached to the garrison engineers in Tamale, Afrifa was born in Mampong in 1936.³⁷ He spent his early childhood at the Artisans' Military School in Mampong where his father was employed on barracks repairs during World War II. In 1943, he went as a boarder to Mampong Presbyterian School. Later he was awarded an Ashanti Confederacy scholarship to Adisadel College, from which he was expelled in 1957 for failing to take his religious instruction examination.

In September of the same year, he was accepted as an officer cadet at the Regular Officers Special Training School at Teshie; and in 1958, he entered RMA Sandhurst, having completed a preparatory course at Mons Officer Cadet School in Aldershot. At the age of twenty-four, in July 1960, Afrifa was commissioned as an infantry second-lieutenant (passing out third in order of merit among the Commonwealth cadets).

Three months after leaving Sandhurst, he was sent to the Congo where he served as a rifle platoon commander in Luluabourg and Bakwanga. He returned to Ghana in March 1961 and was posted in August to the Fifth Battalion at Tamale. Later in the year, he was sent back to the UK to the Schools of Infantry at Hythe and Warminster. On his return in early 1962, Afrifa was again posted to the Congo with the Fifth Battalion which was then under the command of Major Amenu. Next, Afrifa served as a staff officer under Colonel Barwah at First Brigade headquarters, Accra. In September 1965, he joined the Kumasi-based Second Brigade as Kotoka's brigade major.

According to Afrifa, relations between the two officers were at first rather cool due to Kotoka's suspicions that the young Ashanti officer had been sent to Kumasi to spy on him.³⁸ Apparently, the relationship between the two remained poor until, on the advice of Lieutenant-Colonel Amenu and Major Kwashie, Kotoka was persuaded to take Afrifa into his confidence. Early in February 1966, when the two officers were travelling to Tamale and Yendi to reconnoitre for an exercise, Kotoka broached the question of a coup to Afrifa. His circumspect communication was met with an enthusiastic response. As brigade major, Afrifa was to play a key role in the planning and execution of the coup for which he was rewarded with a seat on the NLC.

Next to be brought into the plan was the Kumasi garrison commander, Major I.A. Ashitey. A Ga, who was later court-martialed and dismissed from the army for fence-sitting during the critical hours of the April 1967 abortive counter-coup, Ashitey was born in Accra in March 1929. He joined the Gold Coast Regiment in 1948, being commissioned into the Infantry as a full lieutenant on the same day as Kattah and Amenu with whom he had entered Teshie and Eaton Hall. He was promoted to captain in October 1958 and to major in 1961. It was on Kattah's recommendation that Kotoka successfully solicited Ashitey's support. This was at the beginning of February.

Despite Nkrumah's bellicose pronouncements, it was by no means certain, or even probable, that the president would commit himself to any military

action over Rhodesia. Nevertheless, Flagstaff House directed that special training for such an eventuality should take place. This decision proved a windfall for the conspirators as Kotoka planned to move his troops to the Accra plains (ostensibly because the terrain there resembled that of Rhodesia), thereby ensuring that any potential opposition was given the minimum amount of warning. Kotoka decided that it would be imprudent to inform all his commanders of the plot but that it would be difficult not to include some.

So, having secured Afrifa's and Ashitey's cooperation, Kotoka next enlisted Lieutenant-Colonel John Addy, commander of the Tamale garrison where the Third, Fifth and Parachute Battalions were barracked. A Ga, like Ashitey—who had persuaded Kotoka that the Tamale commander would support a coup—Addy was virtually Kotoka's contemporary. He was born only four days before him in 1926. He was commissioned in June 1955 within six months of Kotoka. This followed six years in the ranks and officer training at Teshie (where, incidentally, he became close friends with Nigeria's Yakubu Gowon) and Eaton Hall.

A few days before the coup, Addy arrived in Accra to sit on a court martial, taking the opportunity to visit an old schoolfellow, a certain Captain A.M. Tetteh (also a Ga) who commanded the Second Battalion of the POGR based at Afienu near the capital. Addy sympathised with Tetteh over the delay in his promotion (at that time, Tetteh's acting rank of major had not been made substantial) and casually suggested that, if any unusual military manoeuvres occurred whilst Nkrumah was abroad, it would be best to do nothing. When the operations of 23/24 February took place a few days later, Captain Tetteh heeded this advice, confining his troops at the Shai Hills Barracks until the hostilities ceased.

The active participation in, or prior knowledge of, the coup by three senior Ga officers (four if Lieutenant-Colonel Crabbe, who is noted below, is included) does not in itself give much indication of an ethnically constituted sub-stratum of conspirators, especially in view of the fact that the Gas accounted for more than one third of the officer corps at that time. But as was explained at some length in Chapter 7, there is substantial evidence to suggest that Ga officers felt particularly insecure about their career prospects. The fates of Awhaitey, Adjei, Adamafio and Ankrah were not regarded as isolated aberrations—least of all from the Ga community's perspective.

The ranks of rebellion were further swollen when Afrifa, with Kotoka's connivance, brought Major Victor Coker-Appiah into the plan. This occurred during a conversation over a glass of beer at the Kumasi City Hotel on 12 February. A Fanti, Coker-Appiah was the first officer to be commissioned into the Engineers and one of the first Ghanaians to be trained at Sandhurst. He received his commission just before his twenty-fifth birthday in August 1958, becoming a major in August 1965. As commander of the Field Engineer Regiment, located at Wajir Barracks, Teshie, Coker-Appiah was assigned responsibility for arresting the Director of Military Intelligence (Hassan),

the commander of the POGR (Zanlerigu) and Lieutenant-Colonel Musa Kuti, head of the Workers' Brigade. He was also responsible for capturing the radio monitoring station in Accra on the night of the coup.

Only at a very late date, a week after a hurried 15 February meeting in Accra between Harlley and Kotoka, was Lieutenant-Colonel Ocran, commander of the First Brigade, made privy to the plot.³⁹ Ocran's support, or at least his neutrality, was critical if the rebellion was to succeed. He was in overall command of four infantry battalions (the First, Second, Fourth and Sixth) and several other units, including the powerful and strategically located Reconnaissance Regiment. He was also at the hub of military communications and had a close and up-to-date knowledge of POGR activities and resources. If the First Brigade rallied to the regime's defence, there could be little hope of success.

Less than twenty-four hours before "Operation Cold Chop" (code-name for the coup)⁴⁰ was launched, Kotoka visited Ocran at his official military residence and informed him of his intentions. Ocran immediately pledged his own support. The two brigade commanders had known each other for almost twenty years. Like Kotoka, Ocran came from a poor farming family, enlisting in the ranks of the Education Service in 1947. The two men were contemporaries at Teshie and Eaton Hall and were commissioned on the same day in November 1954. As the most senior of the two, Kotoka had been promoted to lieutenant-colonel before Ocran, but the two officers had simultaneously been given brigade commands in the 1965 reshuffle. However, had considerations of seniority prevailed, Kotoka should have commanded the First Brigade and Ocran the Second.

Prior to his appointment at First Brigade headquarters, Ocran had commanded the Sixth Battalion. Before that, between October 1962 and April 1964, he served as Adjutant General. A Fanti (Agona), Albert Kwasi Ocran was born in Brakwa in the Central Region of Ghana in 1929 and educated at his uncle's expense at St. Joseph's Primary School in Accra. Rejecting the possibility of a place at Achimota School, Ocran instead chose to join the Gold Coast Regiment. He saw service in the Congo in 1961, first with the UN Observer Group and then with the Fourth Battalion. In 1962, he attended the prestigious Staff College course at Camberley, in England.

It was not until 6.30 p.m. on 23 February, by which time units of the Second Brigade were rapidly approaching the outskirts of Accra, that Lieutenant-Colonel Ocran managed to gather together most of the First Brigade's commanders at his Burma Camp office and disclose that he had agreed to support a coup. In order of seniority, the officers present were: Major Lawrence Okai, commander of the Tema-garrisoned Fourth Infantry Battalion; Major David Asare, commander of the Second Infantry Battalion based in Accra; Captain R.J. Dontoh, commander of the *Ferret*- and *Saladin*-equipped, Accra-based, Reconnaissance Regiment and Captain R.A. Achaab, Dontoh's deputy.⁴¹

Lieutenant-Colonel Crabbe, the commander of the First Battalion (based at Elmina) who had been passed over in the 1965 brigade appointments,

was also informed but he played no part in the coup. As recorded earlier, the two other First Brigade unit commanders, Amenu (Sixth Battalion) and Coker-Appiah (Engineers), were already participants in the plot. Although the officers were presented with a virtual *fait accompli*, one interviewee left a strong impression that Ocran's invitation to support the plan was greeted with genuine enthusiasm. All of the officers present articulated an intense distaste for the CPP regime and its treatment of the regular armed forces.⁴² Had this not been the case, and had these non-Ewe officers decided to thwart the coup, Kotoka's units could have expected heavy casualties and probable subjugation.

Peer Group Solidarity

The links in terms of background, training and career experiences between the inner circle of nine Ewes and the outer ring of main collaborators and unit commanders were not nearly as extensive as those existing within the two separate groups. Nevertheless, important inter-group networks of solidarity, based mainly on bonds formed with course-mates during officer training at Teshie, may be enumerated as illustrated in Table 8.2. For example, Major Okai and Lieutenant-Colonel Ocran had been on the same ROSTS intake as Kotoka in 1954; the latter two had entered Eaton Hall together later in the year. In 1955, Asare and Ashitey were contemporaries with Kattah and Amenu at Teshie; and in September 1955, Ashitey, Kattah and Amenu went on to Eaton Hall together. And in 1956—to take a final instance—Coker-Appiah and Tevie were contemporaries at ROSTS during the second half of Tevie's course and the first three months of Coker-Appiah's.

After the inter-territorial cadet school at Teshie was transformed into Ghana's own Military Academy and Training School in 1960 (when Major-General Alexander was forced to double the annual intake of cadets to 120), the opportunities for social intimacy between the sum of cadets declined correspondingly. However, in the mid-1950s, when there were only a handful of Africans being commissioned into the Gold Coast Regiment every year, the officer cadets would have been extremely well-acquainted with one another.⁴³ It is reasonable to conjecture, therefore, that such friendships were even more close-knit at Eaton Hall where the relative social isolation of Africans made them highly dependent on each other.

But for all the above, the early educational and social similarities of the unit commanders brought in by Ocran (Okai, Asare, Dontoh and Achaab) were even more discernible, as were the socioeconomic backgrounds and shared training experiences between these men and the two other Sandhurst-trained officers (Afrifa and Coker-Appiah). Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show the main details. With the sole exception of Achaab, a northerner (Dagomba), all these officers had been born in the southern half of the country, west of the Volta river. They were members of Ghana's predominant ethnic grouping, the Akan. Okai (from Asafo Akim) was Akwapim, Asare (born

in Gomoa Ojobi) and Afrifa were Ashantis and Coker-Appiah and Dontoh came from the Fanti tribe. Once again, as with the nine Ewe conspirators, it would appear that ethnicity provided a key source of identity within the group of army rebels.

In addition, several other dimensions of solidarity were woven into the ethnic matrix. Firstly, all six had received secondary school education, five of them at some of Ghana's most illustrious schools: Okai and Coker-Appiah at Achimota, Afrifa and Dontoh at Adisadel and Asare at the Government Technical School, Takoradi.⁴⁴ None of these men had served in the rank-and-file. They were also of a roughly similar age and, with the exception of Okai who attained officer status in 1955, they were commissioned after Independence. The contrast between this group and the inner conspiratorial clique is striking. Every member of the inner circle was an Ewe, only one of them (Harley) had attended secondary school and all of them had been commissioned after several years—and in some cases more than a decade—in the ranks, the majority of them before Independence.

There was also an appreciable contrast between the two groups in terms of age. The unit commanders had an average age of thirty-two, whereas that of the Ewes was about forty-two—a difference of some ten years. Quite clearly, the two groups represented different generations of officers entering the army and this distinction was reflected in the type of military training they received. For one thing, it was not until September 1956 that a steady increase in the numbers going to Sandhurst took place (before that only a handful of Gold Coasters had been selected for training there), by which time most of the inner circle of Ewe conspirators had already been commissioned after training at Teshie and Eaton Hall.

On the other hand, the unit commanders had all completed the long (almost two-year) course at RMA Sandhurst, an honour that carried even more prestige in the 1950s than today since very few Africans had by then attended Sandhurst. In fact, these officers were among the first twenty Ghanaians to be educated there, Okai being the second—after Barwah, the first Gold Coaster to be selected for Sandhurst in 1952.

As may be seen in Table 8.2, although only two of the six entered Sandhurst in the same intake (Afrifa and Achaab in September 1958), two of them (Asare and Okai) had overlapped for almost a year in 1955/56, two (Asare and Coker-Appiah) had been together for just under a year from the autumn of 1956 to mid-summer 1957, two (Coker-Appiah and Dontoh) had overlapped courses for ten months in 1957/58, three (Dontoh, Afrifa and Achaab) had overlapping courses for a similar period in 1958/59 and only a five week gap separated the Sandhurst career of Coker-Appiah with those of Afrifa and Achaab. Thus, with the single exception of Okai, each of Ocran's unit commanders had been a contemporary at RMAS of at least two of the others (for example, Coker-Appiah with Dontoh and Asare)—although not necessarily simultaneously—so that an unbroken thread linking the Sandhurst sojourns of these officers can be readily identified.⁴⁵

Earlier it was suggested that friendships formed at Teshie and Eaton Hall were important variables in the construction of the conspiracy. However,

as Luckham has argued in his study of the Nigerian Army, the Sandhurst network was an especially powerful one. In part, this was due to the length and intensity of the course in comparison with the short-service training received at Eaton Hall; but it was also related to the fact that "links formed at Sandhurst extended backwards and forwards in time to members of other immediately contiguous courses."⁴⁶ That the five Akans and one Dagomba were linked together in such a fashion has just been demonstrated. What indications are there, however, that RMAS really was important in generating solidarity in an officer's circle of close acquaintance? Some evidence is available from first-hand observations.

As this writer has witnessed in his former role as Sandhurst's tutor for overseas officers, there is a very strong tendency for foreign officer cadets to stick together, be it during meals, in the bars and company anterooms or in the classrooms and lecture theatres. This proclivity manifests itself even more strongly within the different nationalities so that cadets from Saudi Arabia, for instance, will join up for a night out in London's West End, the Malaysians will go off to *Ragamuffins*, the local discotheque, and the Kenyans might congregate in a corner of the Academy Club for a few pints of ale.

The significance of such intra-national affiliations is further emphasised by the fact that, though there is virtually no social intercourse between different intakes of British cadets, there is frequent contact between their overseas contemporaries. Very often, senior overseas officers from Old and Victory Colleges will become firm friends with newly arrived officer cadets (in New College) from their own country. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that such considerations applied three decades ago when there were very few Africans at the Academy. Indeed, with regard to Indian students, such a situation also seems to have prevailed more than a quarter of a century earlier.⁴⁷

The importance of early training on the formation of peer group solidarity has not been ignored in the literature on military organisations⁴⁸ and its significance should not be underestimated in the present context. Moreover, the bonds formed both within and across adjoining intakes at Sandhurst (collated in Table 8.2) tended to be strengthened, rather than weakened, with time since subsequent career developments invariably followed a roughly similar pattern. These officers' careers were likely to cross frequently—in the Congo and at First Brigade HQ for example—since the army was so small (approximately 100 officers at the end of 1960 and a little over 600 in January 1966), and they were usually promoted more or less together.⁴⁹

Only fifty-five months separated the dates of commission of the most senior of the six (Okai in December 1955) and the most junior (Achaab in July 1960); three (Okai, Asare and Dontoh) were promoted full lieutenant within six months of each other in 1957 and to captain within the same span in 1960; two (Afrifa and Achaab) were commissioned on the same date and promoted to full lieutenant within eight weeks of one another in 1960; and the three majors (Okai, Asare and Coker-Appiah) had all been

promoted to that rank between June and August 1965, the latter two in the same month.

In a number of ways, then, the Sandhurst contingent of collaborators belonged to a variety of mutually reinforcing primary reference and peer groups that can be objectively illustrated and which were subjectively important. Interviews with Okai and Asare indicated that these networks provided the most important frame of reference to the commanders when Ocran gathered them together on the eve of the coup. As one of them put it: "When Albert [Ocran] told us the plan we were surprised but we knew we could trust each other. We were friends."⁵⁰

To sum up: much of this chapter has been concerned with scrutinising the military training, rank grading, promotion rates and career patterns of the conspirators. An attempt has been made to show how these variables provided focal points or areas of convergence in the formation of peer groups, within which friendship and mutual confidence could be created and nurtured. The importance of these factors in the relationship between the more senior circle of Ewe army and police ex-rankers on the one hand and the outer ring of younger, mainly Akan, officers on the other has been stressed, but they were much more extensive within the separate groups. Such sources of integration provided foundation stones and building-blocks of solidarity and trust which were important in the construction of the conspiracy. There were, in fact, other officers with similar backgrounds and career experiences who were not involved in the cabal. But many of these—to portend the sequence of events described in Chapter 9—provided a certain degree of active or tacit support in the critical hours of 23/24 February.

With particular reference to military organisations, attention has also been drawn to a number of investigators who have emphasised the importance of previous social background in the formation of close relationships. Similarities in earlier life relating, for instance, to area of origin and schooling appear to contribute to social bonding in this way. Conversely, heterogeneous ethnic/regional origins tend to inhibit the formation of primary group relations. It is with these observations in mind that an earlier part of this chapter was concerned with the ethnic profile of the uniformed rebels.

Every officer recruited before the end of 1965—that is to say, all nine members of what have been labelled the inner and intermediate groups—was an Ewe. Such primordial uniformity is all the more remarkable when it is considered that at the time only one fifth of army officers in the rank of major and above had their origins in the Trans-Volta from where the Ewe come. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the coup might be viewed as a plot by one tribe to impose its will on the country. Indeed, as Chapter 11 reveals, such perceptions lay at the very heart of the junior ranks' counter-coup in April 1967.

On the other hand, the version of events that sees the Ghana coup as a premeditated plan by Ewes to dominate army and state is far too simple. For one thing, it ignores the individual motives of the leading army and

police protagonists. Harley, for example, was under suspicion for complicity in diamond smuggling and Kotoka had been given the number two brigade appointment in the August 1965 reshuffle. As will be seen, both men—as well as Afrifa—feared dismissal. It was quite possible, therefore, for private concerns about career prospects to be meshed with, and catalysed by, a wider hostility toward the political regime for its alleged mistreatment of the Ewe people.

It is not necessary, therefore, to maintain that the February rebellion was the culmination of a single tribal plot in order to give credence to the conclusion that ethnic identities provided the single most important source of cohesion to the central group of conspirators. Neither does one have to assume an absolute unity of interest and purpose within this inner core. Rather, the evidence suggests that it would be more realistic to adopt the standpoint of social psychologists who maintain that personal relationships between members of an organisation tend to cluster around primordial ties because of conscious and unconscious similarities in outlook or shared value systems. For this reason, specific and familiar identifications or reference groups—whether of blood, race, region or tribe—have been regarded as an important aspect of political and military rebellion.

Such indices often account for the key organisational features of a conspiratorial cabal since characteristics of secrecy, loyalty and ease of communications would tend to be maximised in a single primordial grouping. This emphasises Deutsch's view that the essence of social communication is the search for predictability through a reduction of mistrust.⁵¹ The fact that the policemen at first turned for support to officers who were not in command of combat units when they were recruited underlines the importance of ethnicity in the early planning of the putsch.

Notes

1. S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall, 1962), p.61.

2. Interview, Colonel V. Coker-Appiah, 15 April 1974. It is noteworthy, too, that Coker-Appiah (as well as Afrifa, another protagonist in the rebellion) was at Sandhurst with Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, one of the leaders of the January 1966 coup in Nigeria.

3. *Parliamentary Debates* (Accra: Government Printer, 1 February 1966), Vol.72, cols.929-932.

4. *Daily Graphic*, 19 May 1961.

5. M. Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964), pp.86-87.

6. The primary sources include *The Army Lists, Dec 1951-Sept 1967* (London: HMSO, 1951-1967); *List of Ghanaian Senior Retired Officers* (Annex "A" to MOD/17619/Intelligence Service, 21 October 1976, Accra); *The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967* (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine, 1966-1968* (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1966-1968); *Ghana Gazette, 1957-1966* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1957-1966); and *The Wish Stream: Journal of the Royal Military*

Academy Sandhurst (1953–1966). Some useful data has also been gleaned from books by Afrifa and Ocran noted later in the text.

7. There is some indication to suggest that Madjitey was also implicated in this proto-plot. See L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1972), p.62; and R. First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat* (Harmondsworth: Penguin African Library, 1970), pp.196, 368. First speculates on the possibility that Harlley deliberately engineered the downfall of his superior in order to pave the way for his own promotion.

8. Frequent changes of religious affiliation are not uncommon in Ghana where, historically, most schools have been mission schools. Transfer from one school to another often entails changing religion. Afrifa, for example, was a Methodist by baptism, a Presbyterian by confirmation and an Anglican by education and association. Information on the religious denominations of the conspiratorial group as a whole is not very solid; however, three members of the inner circle of five (Deku, Kotoka and Kattah) were Roman Catholic—the other two (Harlley and Kwashie) being affiliated to the Presbyterian church. From an analysis of birthplace, forenames and schools attended, it seems likely that, of the thirteen remaining conspirators, seven were Presbyterians, three Roman Catholics, two Anglicans and one (Achaab) a Muslim.

9. Apart from his possible involvement in the Awhaitey affair (see *Proceedings and Report of the Commission Appointed to enquire into the matters disclosed at the trial of Captain Benjamin Awhaitey before a court-martial and the surrounding circumstances* [Accra: Government Printer, 1959], pp.169, 212), and his key role in the 1966 coup, Kattah's unrivalled position as Ghana's arch-conspirator was further enhanced by his plots against Dr Busia's Progress Party in 1971 and against Acheampong's military regime in 1974. See S.J. Baynham, *The Military in African Politics: Colonel Acheampong's Coup*, Exeter University, M.A. dissertation, 1975, pp.76, 89.

10. According to one observer, Harlley, as head of Special Branch, also established his own secret intelligence apparatus with Deku as one of his operators. R.E. Dowse, "The Military and Political Development," in C. Leys (ed.), *Politics and Change in Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.235.

11. A.A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup* (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p.41. Also, according to Captain Kwashie, Kotoka constantly made derogatory remarks about Nkrumah and the CPP after his return from Britain in 1955. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka*, p.64.

12. Interview, Major-General D.C.K. Amenu, 30 April 1974.

13. As noted previously, Tevie enlisted on two occasions—in 1943 and in 1949.

14. The validity of this interpretation will become more apparent when the links between these conspirators and the outer group of collaborators are examined later in the chapter.

15. Akan proverb roughly translated as: "Only birds of the same species play together on the same tree." The saying is symbolised in a figurative Ashanti gold-weight showing a number of birds perched on a tree.

16. R.M. Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case," *World Politics* 23, 3 (April 1971), p.404.

17. R.K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Glencoe, 1963), Part II; M. Argyle, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour* (London: Penguin, 1972), Chapter 7; and T.M. Newcomb, *Social Psychology* (London: Tavistock, 1959), Part V.

18. M. Janowitz and R. Little, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Russell Sage, 1959), p.80.

19. At the beginning of 1966, of the thirty-three lieutenant-colonels and majors (listed in Table 9.3, notes g and h), seventeen (51.5 percent) were Akan, eight (24.25 percent) were Ga, seven (21.21 percent) were Ewe and one (3 percent) was of Nigerian origin. In numerical terms, the sixteen lieutenant-colonels were divided as follows: Ga: six, Ewe: five, Akan: four, Nigerian origin: one. For the seventeen majors, the breakdown was as follows: Akan: thirteen, Ewe: two, Ga: two. Sources as for Tables 3.2, 8.1 and 9.1.

20. Newcomb, *Social Psychology*, p.629.

21. C.H. Coates and R.J. Pellegrin, *Military Sociology: A Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life* (University Park, Md.: The Social Science Press, 1965), p.155.

22. *Ibid.*

23. N. Keijzer, *Military Obedience* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1978), p.53.

24. K. Young, *Handbook of Social Psychology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p.224.

25. R. Rathbone, "Ghana," in J. Dunn (ed.), *West African States: Failure and Promise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.28.

26. Two such are P.C. Rosenblatt, "Origins and Effects of Group Ethnocentrism and Nationalism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 8, 2 (June 1964), pp.131-146; and B.C. Shafer, *Nationalism: Myth and Reality* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955).

27. Interview, Colonel E.A. Yeboah, 12 August 1975. An editorial column in an army paper also described how "80 percent of us speak in the vernacular during working hours. . . . The effect of this practice is that when two people of the same tribe keep on speaking in the vernacular, a third person who does not understand the language—but happens to be around—feels that he is being discussed. This causes a great deal of suspicion and embarrassment." *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 3 (February 1968), p.3.

28. These developments are discussed in more detail in A. Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longmans, 1975), pp.182-183.

29. Undoubtedly the best account of the 1954 election is by D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), Chapter V.

30. *Ibid.*, pp.349-350. Here it should be noted that, traditionally, the Ewe of Ghana and Togo have never known centralised government, their largest political units were village groups with councils of elders. The 1951 disturbances led Nkrumah to take stern measures against the Anlo inhabitants of Anloga and the surrounding areas and many people were ill-treated by the police. When the Anloga National Assembly representative, the Reverend Dr Fiawoo, attempted to persuade his people to pay the statutory rates, they responded by burning down his house.

31. Just before Independence, the government received reports that training camps had been established in the bush, northeast of Ho, with the aim of disrupting celebrations and focusing world attention on the supposed plight of an unwilling Togoland being forced to join the new state of Ghana. Armed police, and troops from Takoradi, were sent to the area and numerous sweeps and searches were carried out, particularly in the Kpandu and Anloga districts. A. Haywood and F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1964), p.481.

32. P.C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change* (London: Penguin, 1972), p.294.

33. Harlley and Deku from their positions within the NLC, Dedjoe in his capacity as chairman of the Volta Regional Committee of Administration.

34. For example, we are told that "Kotoka had been accused many times, particularly by Barwah, of tribalism and of being pro-Ewe." Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, p.40.

35. On earlier connections between Ewe military personnel and Ewe politicians, see the section on the Awhaitey affair in Chapter 5.

36. Interview with Brigadier A.K. Kattah, 23 May 1974. See, too, the view of one theorist on the advisability of disguising the political coloration of military rebels: E. Luttwak, *Coup d'état: A Practical Handbook* (London, Penguin, 1968), p.54.

37. Afrifa's great-grandfather, Owusu Sekyere, the Mamponghehene, had been second-in-command of the Ashanti military forces. Other military links included his mother's two brothers who had served as corporals in the 82nd (West African) Division in Burma. Afrifa also had connections with the police since his elder brother was a policeman.

38. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, p.39. At one stage, Kotoka requested Barwah to transfer Afrifa after an incident in which a voodoo priest apparently blamed Afrifa for Kotoka's stomach pains. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka*, p.75.

39. An explanation for the conspirators' reluctance to bring him into the plot—until the last moment—has been provided by Ocran himself: "I believe that in the initial stages of planning [Kotoka] was reluctant to let me into the secret for fear that I was one of those in the good books of the ex-President by virtue of my appointment to Flagstaff House in 1961 as a Military Assistant for a period of three months. Again, my appointment in 1965 as One Brigade Commander, in preference to him who was my senior, might have given him grounds for his uncertainty as to my relationship with Nkrumah." A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), p.85.

40. "Chop" is West African pidgin English for "food;" "cold chop" is a meal that can be served instantly. "Cold Chop" has thus become a slang expression for anything that can be got easily or without much effort.

41. Okai and Asare held the acting rank of lieutenant-colonel, Dontoh the acting rank of major.

42. Interview, Brigadier D.A. Asare, 22 April 1974.

43. Three were commissioned in 1953, five in 1954, six in both 1955 and 1956 and seven in 1957.

44. Major Okai had also spent nearly two years at the Kumasi College of Technology, now the University of Science and Technology.

45. Bonds between course-mates must have been cemented further by similar training experiences at specialist military institutions such as the Small Arms School, Hythe, the Warminster School of Infantry and the Armoured Warfare School at Bovington. For instance, Okai, Asare and Afrifa were all at Warminster, and Dontoh and Achaab trained at Bovington.

46. A.R. Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p.132.

47. "There was a sizable community of Indian cadets at Sandhurst at that time (1926-1927) and we clung to one another." A. Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.9.

48. See, for instance, Janowitz and Little, *Sociology and the Military Establishment*; and R. Little's chapter, "Social Cohesion Under Prolonged Stress," in M. Janowitz, (ed.), *The New Military* (New York: Sage, 1964), Part 4.

49. What is more, RMAS-educated officers in Ghana tend to regard themselves (and are regarded by their peers) as a cut above the rest. In this author's experience, they often exhibited a certain *hauteur* towards their colleagues, emphasising their own exclusiveness with "Sandhurst-Only" get-togethers.

50. Interview, Brigadier D.A. Asare, 22 April 1974.

51. K.W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966), p.111. See, too, J.S. Saul, "The Unsteady State," *Review of African Political Economy* (Jan-April 1976), p.12: " . . . the sharing of a common ethnic background . . . can often serve as a kind of lowest common denominator of trust and communication on the basis of which negotiations towards formation of a political alliance may take place."

9

Operation Cold Chop: The Coup of February 1966

The enquiry to be followed in this chapter may be expressed in quite simple terms—namely what can be gleaned about the relative roles of the army and police in the coup from a narrative of the events that took place on 23/24 February 1966. Several reasonably non-contradictory descriptions of the revolt already exist. These are in the form of books by two of the leading army participants or monographs written by Ghanaian civilians and printed locally in Accra.¹ Readings of these secondary sources provide some useful information; but whether taken individually or together, they fail to provide a comprehensive or authoritative picture of the whole. The manuscripts share common weaknesses. Their materials on the inner springs of the conspiracy and the dynamics of the rebellion are thin and they are almost bereft of explanatory analysis. At the same time, the reflections of Afrifa and Ocran share the familiar weaknesses of memoirs: they are based on personal experience and they exaggerate the parts played by their authors. In short, they do not amount to a systematic and objective treatment of the events in question, whilst giving the impression that only a handful of individuals were involved in the rebellion. The present account, relying as it does on new documentary sources as well as on verbal evidence in the manner of the previous chapter, attempts to provide a more authentic portrayal of the coup.

The actual mechanics of the rebellion are quite well-known, making it unnecessary to review the operation at length, save to indicate the main chain of events and several factors which bear on the successor regime and the internal cohesion of the military establishment. First, as we have just seen, there were very few people in on the planning until the end and they were Ewes. Second, it was only a small section of the army that attacked the regime, about 600 men mostly drawn from companies of the Second Brigade. Opposition from elements of the security forces was anticipated by the coup planners—particularly from those individuals and units with a clear stake in the political *status quo*. These included Brigadier Barwah, Colonel Hassan and Lieutenant-Colonel Zanlerigu together with all the formations of the National Security Service. Of particular concern

was that body especially created to protect Nkrumah, Department 1 or the Presidential Detail Department. Third, and perhaps the most important, was the coup itself, an illegal seizure of power which established a precedent, one that involved an initiative by officers which strained hierarchical norms in the army (though not, significantly, in the police). One consequence was the junior officers' counter-coup of April 1967.

In a number of important respects, this study contradicts some of the accepted assumptions about the action under review. For one thing, it demonstrates that the extent of active and passive collaboration on the part of the army officer corps was much wider than hitherto thought. During the years of the First Republic, many army officers came to share a growing disillusionment about the CPP regime. As was emphasised in Chapter 7, they were particularly concerned about the alternative security apparatus run from the presidential office which was viewed as a direct threat to the regular army's very existence. The degree to which this apprehension was felt may be gauged, it can be surmised, by the number of ranking officers who supported the coup leaders immediately before and/or during "Operation Cold Chop." Six lieutenant-colonels, five majors and five captains comprised the army element of the conspiracy described in the preceding chapter. But almost 60 percent of Ghana-based officers at the level of major and above collaborated in the putsch. In other words, an investigation into the background and disposition of other middle-ranking and senior officers who were not involved in the actual plotting reveals that the scale of complicity was much more extensive than has been suggested to date.

The second area of interest that this section may help to clarify concerns the position of the police. This research challenges the widely accepted belief that the police service played a minor part in the coup itself. The evidence suggests that the service was important not merely in initiating the plot (as seen in Chapter 8) but also in the coordination and direction of operations during the critical hours of the revolt. It is interesting to note, moreover, that it was the police, and not the army, which was instrumental in checking the 1967 coup attempt fourteen months later. Thus, whilst it is true that the police could not have launched the coup on its own, it was, nevertheless, the driving force in toppling Nkrumah's CPP.

The summary of events relating to the police includes some comparisons with the army concerning, *inter alia*, recruitment, Africanisation, functions and reputation. Some noticeable contrasts between the two forces existed (for instance, in the formal educational qualifications of the two groups of officers); but in several respects, the army and police resembled one another. One example concerned their respective experience in matters of internal security. On many occasions—during the disorders in the Volta Region immediately prior to and after Independence, after the bomb campaign in Accra as well as in the Congo—the coercive resources of the military operated in close liaison with the police. Naturally, one would expect the army's role in police-type operations to have a clearly discernible impact on the ability of the two services to act as one in an armed rebellion.

The Coup

As in most African states where the military has intervened, the objectives of the Ghanaian conspirators were expedited by the concentration of government buildings, party officials and symbols of state in the capital city. In tactical terms, the aim was to capture key installations in Accra; as a matter of strategy, the object was to destroy every facet of CPP rule and eradicate the NSS which had been created to protect the regime. The operation was successful in both these respects.

"Operation Cold Chop" began at 4 a.m. on Wednesday 23 February 1966 when 600 soldiers of the Third Infantry Battalion were moved south from Tamale garrison on what was made to appear a test exercise in connection with the Rhodesian emergency. To avoid arousing suspicion, Lieutenant-Colonel Addy ordered that the battalion be moved in company groups and that the men should be kept ignorant of the operation until they were well away from the Northern Region. In theory, the manoeuvres were to take place in Yendi near the Togo border; in practice, the troops were transported by truck to Accra.

At midday, the battalion linked up with units from Kumasi on the road between Ejura and Atebubu where a decision was taken that Kotoka would proceed to the capital. There, together with Tevie, he set up his operational headquarters at Captain Kwashie's home, located only a few hundred yards from the entrance to Flagstaff House. It was from this building that operations were synchronised with Harlley and (later) Lieutenant-Colonel Ocran.

Skirting Kumasi to avoid attracting attention, the convoy of thirty-five vehicles under Brigade Major Afrifa's command penetrated Accra undetected via Agona and Ejisu. It was just after four in the morning on 24 February. Despite an eleventh hour attempt by Ocran to postpone the actions,² but aided by hesitation and confusion at Burma Camp (where reports of drunken soldiers firing off their rifles conflicted with rumours of major troop movements), the operation was largely over by mid-morning, by which time the Guard Regiment—surprised, surrounded and outnumbered—had surrendered to the insurgents.

Soon after reaching Accra, Afrifa made straight for Broadcasting House and seized the radio—confirming Bronowski's observations that "in modern times communications are typically the first target in a revolution . . . because if they are cut then authority is cut off and breaks down."³ Meanwhile Captian Seshie, Afrifa's deputy, began the assault on Flagstaff House. The fighting at Nkrumah's official residence was still in the balance when Afrifa went on the air to say that an important message would soon be made. At 6 a.m., Kotoka's formal broadcast announced that the army, together with the police, had taken over the government of Ghana:

Fellow citizens of Ghana, I have come to inform you that the military, in cooperation with the Ghana Police, have taken over the government of Ghana today. The myth surrounding Nkrumah has been broken. Parliament is dissolved and Kwame Nkrumah is dismissed from office. All ministers are also dismissed.

The Convention People's Party is disbanded with effect from now. It will be illegal for any person to belong to it. We appeal to you to be calm and cooperative. All persons in detention will be released in due course. Please stay by your radios and await further details.⁴

Armed resistance to the insurgents was not substantial and was anyway confined to Flagstaff House and its immediate environs. There elements of the POGR's First Battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Zanlerigu, supported by Cuban-trained civilian security personnel of the Presidential Detail Department, put up a fight with a Russian-made armoured car, heavy machine-guns and miscellaneous small-arms. The firing from Flagstaff House began to die down following Kotoka's ultimatum that his forces would annihilate those inside unless they surrendered. Nkrumah's Egyptian wife, Fathia, ordered the Guard Regiment to cease fire. This it did at around 11 a.m. It was clear that Zanlerigu's troops could never have survived a battle of attrition. By noon, the flats housing the bodyguard unit opposite Flagstaff House had been cleared and the last pockets of sporadic resistance had been mopped up by two companies from Major Asare's Second Battalion and armoured squadrons of the Recce Regiment under Major Dontoh and his second-in-command, Captain Achaab.

With the exception of an arrest squad commanded by Major Coker-Appiah, the First Brigade did not move until the fighting was virtually over. Whilst the conventional interpretation of the coup portrays Ocran as one of the revolution's heroes, it seems clear that the colonel's irresolution during the critical hours of the operation was tailored to ensure his own survival in the event of a misfire. At times, Ocran's contradictory orders and indecisiveness almost set his own troops in combat against each other. At one point, his instructions resulted in the Field Engineer Regiment being blockaded in Wejir barracks by Major Okai's Fourth Battalion.

It was only after Kotoka's dawn broadcast, when the success of the rebellion seemed reasonably assured, that Ocran rushed Second Battalion infantrymen (who were spurred into action with the information that they were to crush a POGR mutiny) and *Saladin* armoured vehicles to reinforce units of the Second Brigade which were facing heavy fire at Flagstaff House. Quite apart from Ocran's temporising, there can be no doubt that the entire operation would have taken much longer—and might very well have been put in jeopardy—had the Second Battalion of the POGR arrived to augment Zanlerigu's forces which in theory it was tasked to do. In fact, as will be recalled, Captain Tetteh took Addy's hint and kept his troops well back (sitting out the confrontation at their Afiencya barracks), leaving Zanlerigu's beleaguered force totally unsupported. In contrast to Ocran, Lieutenant-Colonel Addy arrived at Flagstaff House (in a little *Morris Minor*) to encourage his men. However, he was forced to make an undignified retreat when his motorcar was fired on and he was slightly injured.

At the time of the coup, the C-in-C, President Nkrumah, was on his way to Hanoi at Ho Chi Minh's invitation with proposals for ending the war in Vietnam, while his Chief of Defence Staff, Major-General Aferi,

was in Addis Ababa on OAU business.⁵ The absence of the military's top officers was an important consideration in the timing of the coup because it weakened the command structure of the army so that loyalist countervailing forces lacked obvious focal points around which to rally and retaliate, making the regime more vulnerable to attack.

Elsewhere, Coker-Appiah's Field Squadron arrested the Military Intelligence chief, Colonel Hassan, and Lieutenant-Colonel Musa Kuti of the Workers' Brigade; however, Zanlerigu, bare-foot and half-dressed, escaped from his house through the kitchen window to raise the alarm at Flagstaff House.

Unfortunately for the rebels, the army's telephone system had not been disconnected at 1 a.m. as planned so that Hassan's son was able to contact the POGR commander and warn him of his approaching captors. The Deputy CDS, Charles Mohamed Barwah, was shot down in front of his wife whilst resisting capture. News of the arrests and Barwah's death alerted Minister of Civil Defence Kofi Baako who contacted Commodores David Hansen and Michael Otu, the navy and air force commanders. But ignorant of developments—a state of affairs encouraged by Ocran—the two commanders could do little but issue vague directives from the operations room at Burma Camp. Eventually, and with Ocran's connivance, the two service chiefs were arrested at gunpoint when Major Dontoh and his troops arrived in two armoured cars and a jeep, leaving the dilatory Ocran free to carry out his assignment.

In contrast to the internecine slaughter and ritualistic degradation that characterised Nigerian events in 1966, the rebellion was almost bloodless. Brigadier Barwah was the only regular army officer killed. Only one Guard Regiment soldier died. He had the misfortune to be at the Flagstaff House gate when the first insurgents arrived. Apart from these two, the casualty figures at the end of the encounter stood at seven soldiers killed (Sergeant Abdulai Alhassan, Corporal Lassey Sewoatsei and Privates Francis Asante, Adjoba Grunshie, Lawrence Mensah, Anthony Opeku and Arnold Kwao) as well as four civilians. Approximately three dozen soldiers and civilians were wounded. Four of Captain Seshie's men were killed when a Soviet-made launcher fired an 82-mm. rocket into the middle of Seshie's vehicles. The civilian injuries were the result of indiscriminate fire from the Guard Regiment in Flagstaff House.⁶

In view of the size of Nkrumah's National Security Service, it is astonishing that the casualty rate was not much higher. The fact that it was not may be put down to the swiftness and secrecy of the conspirators and the considered *immobilisme* of the POGR's Second Battalion. It is most unlikely that the result would have been any different had Nkrumah been in the country.

Disposition and Deployment of the Armed Forces

At this stage, it is also pertinent to detail the precise disposition of the major combat and staff commands on the night of 23/24 February. As

TABLE 9.1
DISPOSITION OF MILITARY COMMANDS, 23/24 FEBRUARY 1966

Command	Location ^a	Rank ^b and Name	Ethnic origin
C-in-C	FH	President Kwame Nkrumah	Akan (Nzima)
CDS	MOD	Maj.-Gen. N.A. Aferi	Akan (Akwapim)
Deputy CDS	MOD	Brig. C.M. Barwah	North (Mamprussi)
1st Brigade	Accra	Lt.-Col. A.K. Ocran	Akan (Fanti)
2nd Brigade	Kumasi	Lt.-Col. E.K. Kotoka	Ewe
1st Battalion	Elmina	Lt.-Col. A.A. Crabbe	Ga
2nd Battalion	Accra	Maj. D.A. Asare	Akan (Fanti)
3rd Battalion	Tamale	Lt.-Col. J.T. Addy	Ga
4th Battalion	Tema	Maj. L.A. Okai	Akan (Akwapim)
5th Battalion	Tamale	Lt.-Col. J.T. Addy	Ga
6th Battalion	Takoradi	Lt.-Col. D.C.K. Amenu	Ewe
1st Battalion, POGR	FH	Lt.-Col. D.G. Zanlerigu	North (Fra-Fra)
2nd Battalion, POGR	Afienya	Maj. G.A. Tetteh	Ga
Recce Regiment	Accra	Maj. R.J. Dontoh	Akan (Fanti)
Engineers	Teshie	Maj. V. Coker-Appiah	Akan (Fanti)
Signals	MOD	Maj. M.K. Gbagonah	Ewe
Supply & Transport	MOD	Maj. W.C.O. Acquaye-Nortey	Ga
Ordnance	MOD	Maj. H.O. Appiah	Akan (Fanti)
EME	MOD	Capt. D.A. Lartey	Akan (Larteh)
Ops & Plans	MOD	Lt.-Col. D.K. Addo	Ga
Intelligence	MOD	Col. M.M. Hassan	Akan (Nzima)
Adjutant General	MOD	Lt.-Col. A.K. Kattah	Ewe
Military Secretary	MOD	Capt. R.E.A. Kotei	Ga
Logistics	MOD	Lt.-Col. C.K. Tevie	Ewe
Navy	MOD	Commodore D.A. Hansen	Ga
Air Force	MOD	Commodore M.A. Otu	Akan (Akwapim)

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); Ghana Armed Forces Magazine (1966-67); Daily Graphic (February-March 1966 issues); The Army Lists 1965-66 (London: HMSO, 1965-66); interviews with serving and retired army officers; and the writer's special biographical file on the Ghanaian officer corps.

^a Flagstaff House and the Ministry of Defence are both in Accra; Afienya is near Teshie.

^b Ranks are based on the seniority dates utilised by the armed forces and not on temporary or acting positions which in the case of several officers was one rank higher.

indicated in Table 9.1, both infantry brigade groups, all six infantry battalions as well as the strategically powerful Reconnaissance and Field Engineers Regiments were commanded by nine members of the conspiratorial cabal (Ocran, Kotoka, Crabbe, Asare, Addy, Okai, Amenu, Dontoh and Coker-Appiah), with the majority of key posts at the Ministry of Defence held either by members of the inner clique of collaborators (Lieutenant-Colonel Kattah in the office of Adjutant General and Lieutenant-Colonel Tevie at Logistics) or by mainly Ewe and Ga officers (Lieutenant-Colonel Addo [Operations and Plans], Majors Gbagonah [Signals] and Acquaye-Nortey [Supply and Transport] and the Military Secretary, Captain Kotei) who were probably informed of the plot at the last moment and who were prepared to aid the coup-makers by their inferential neutrality or passive support.⁷

Thus, virtually all battalion and unit commanders, but not the CDS and his three service heads, were a party to the coup. It is ironic that the one body which had been created as a counter-weight to the regular armed forces was able to mobilise only one of its battalions in the regime's defence—and then for a limited period only. It is especially significant since the very existence of the POGF, which in the event proved so ineffectual, was one of the major stimuli to the coup.

At first glance, it would appear that the operational success of the coup was related to the extraordinarily high proportion of senior and middle-ranking officers within, or favourably disposed toward, the insurgent group. Table 9.2 summarises the distribution of the conspirators amongst the ranks (lieutenant-colonel, major and captain being the only levels represented from a possible spread of eight ranks, second-lieutenant to major-general). The representation of the conspirators in the key command and staff appointments has already been documented in Table 9.1.

However, neither of these tables indicate the overall quantum of posts held by the insurgents in the ranks of captain and above. These are enumerated in Table 9.3. From this it is clear that the proportion of positions occupied by the rebel officers at the ranks of lieutenant-colonel (almost 40 percent) and major (almost 30 percent) is extremely high. If the two ranks are bunched together, the fraction is exactly a third—eleven out of thirty-three. It is also interesting to record, moreover, that although the five most senior army officers were not involved in ousting the regime, six of the twenty-one (28.6 percent) highest-ranking officers in the army were involved in staging the coup. If the rank of major is brought into the equation, the proportion of officers associated with the action (eleven out of thirty-eight) is almost the same—in fact at 28.9 percent it is actually a little higher.

But even these statistics do not paint a complete portrait of the degree of collusion and sympathy given to the rebels by many officers in the rank of major and above who, although not central participants in the coup, were willing, nevertheless, to provide a certain amount of technical or tacit support. Uncertainty was additionally minimised by the absence from the country of a number of officers on staff and specialist courses or officers

TABLE 9.2
DISTRIBUTION OF RANKS: FEBRUARY 1966 ARMY CONSPIRATORS^a

Rank ^b	Combat commissions	Direct commissions	Total
Lt.-Colonel	6	0	6
Major	4	1	5
Captain	3	2	5
Total	13	3	16

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); The Army Lists 1965-66 (London: HMSO, 1965-66); interviews with serving and retired army officers; and the writer's special biographical file on the Ghanaian officer corps.

^a Figures relate to the individuals listed in Table 8.1, therefore excluding officers like Crabbe (who was privy to the plot), Seshie (who helped in the fighting at Flagstaff House but who was not informed of the plot until the last moment) and Gbagonah and Kotei (who may have had some forewarning of the conspirators' plans).

^b Ranks are based on the seniority dates utilised by the army and not on temporary or acting positions.

posted to diplomatic missions as military advisers or attachés. Interviews with the then CDS, Major-General Aferi, as well as with nine of the thirty-three individuals who held the rank of lieutenant-colonel or major in February 1966⁸ indicate that at least fifteen officers (but probably one or two more) fit into these categories. These are quite apart from a number of captains and subalterns such as Afrifa's deputy, Seshie, who gave active support to the rebels.

With the exceptions of Barwah (who was killed) and Aferi (who was in Ethiopia), this means that only twenty-five army officers at major and above—three full colonels, ten half colonels and twelve majors—were not members of the conspiratorial cabal described in the preceding chapter. Director of Military Intelligence Colonel Hassan, it will be remembered, was arrested during the coup operation. This leaves only two colonels unaccounted for. However, both these men were serving abroad at the time, Colonel C.C. Bruce at the Staff College, Camberley, and Colonel George Slater at the Ghana Embassy in Washington.

Of the ten lieutenant-colonels not directly implicated in the plot, Lieutenant-Colonel Crabbe (First Battalion commander) and Lieutenant-Colonel Addo (Director of Operations and Plans) were informed of the rebels'

objectives on the eve of the coup. There is also evidence that Lieutenant-Colonel Sanni-Thomas, then attached to the office of state protocol, had knowledge of the plot as early as January. In addition to these, Lieutenant-Colonels Quaye, Yarboi, Mensah-Brown and Ewa were on overseas senior staff courses or posted abroad on diplomatic appointments. Moving down one rank, we find that although only five of the army's seventeen majors were at the kernel of the conspiracy, two, Major Gbagonah (Director of Signals) and Major Acquay-Nortey (Supply and Transport), had been forewarned of the coup. Four others, Majors J.R.K. Acquah, Nyante, Appiah and M.O. Koranteng were serving abroad. This left only six majors actually in Ghana who were not participants in or party to the plot, some of whom may have had an inkling of developments in their role as battalion seconds-in-command.

To summarise, it can be appreciated that while Table 9.3 points to the participation in the coup of a significant minority of middle-grade and senior officers (almost 29 percent of majors and above and over 6 percent of captains and above), it does not address itself to the taciturn abetment from a much wider group of officers or to the absence from the country of many others.

Thus, of the twelve lieutenant-colonels in Ghana at 23/24 February, nine (75 percent) were active participants in or aware of the plan to topple the regime. Even if hostility from the three lieutenant-colonels in Ghana who were not in the know and the four who were abroad is assumed (an improbable notion), we still find that nine of the sixteen lieutenant-colonels (56.25 percent) *at least* connived in the conspiracy. Of the thirteen majors serving at home when the rebellion occurred, seven (53.8 percent) fall into the first category of active participation or passive support and seven out of the army's seventeen majors (41.2 percent) fit into the second classification.

If the officers from the two ranks are bunched together, we discover that sixteen of the twenty-five (64 percent) fit into the first bracket and sixteen out of thirty-three (48.5 percent) into the second. Finally, the corresponding figures for all ranks from major to major-general inclusive are sixteen out of twenty-seven (59.25 percent) and sixteen out of thirty-eight (42.1 percent). For easy reference, this data is incorporated in Table 9.4.

The present exposition on the involvement and military disposition of the ranking army officers has been detailed because it is important to demonstrate that the coup was not just the work of a few senior soldiers and police chiefs. Three levels of direct complicity in the plot were revealed in Chapter 8; in this section, a fourth group of officers has been identified. For the most part, they were majors (with a sprinkling of half colonels and senior captains) based at the MOD who provided technical and logistic support. A few others knew what was going on but were not active in the operations. The fact that almost 60 percent (64 percent if two of the key targets of the revolt, Barwah and Hassan, are excluded) of majors and above then serving at home were directly or indirectly implicated in the

TABLE 9.3
REPRESENTATION OF FEBRUARY 1966 ARMY CONSPIRATORS IN THE OFFICER HIERARCHY^a

Rank ^b	No. of officers		No. of conspirators		% of conspirators	
	Total	Combat ^c	Total	Combat ^c	Total	Combat ^c
Major-General	1 ^d	1	-	-	-	-
Brigadier	1 ^e	1	-	-	-	-
Colonel	3 ^f	3	-	-	-	-
Lt.-Colonel	16 ^g	16	6	6	37.5	37.5
Major	17 ^h	14	5	4	29.4	28.6
Captain	139 ⁱ	85	5	3	3.6	3.5

Sources: As for Table 9.2

^a Excludes: short service commissions (of which only a handful were captains and above, thus making very little difference to the analysis), chaplains and officers of the Army Volunteer Force and the Women Auxiliary Corps.

^b Ranks are based on the seniority dates utilised by the army and not on temporary or acting positions.

^c Infantry, Reconnaissance, Engineers, Signals, Supply and Transport, Ordnance, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

^d N.A. Aferi.

^e C.M. Barwah.

^f M.M. Hassan, C.C. Bruce, G.H. Slater.

^g E.K. Kotoka, A.K. Ocran, A.K. Kattah, D.C.K. A'menu, C.K. Tevie, J.T. Addy, A.A. Crabbe, P. Quaye, P. Laryea, G.K. Yarboi, D.K. Addo, M.B. Sanni-Thomas, J.P.K. Mensah-Brown, S.A. Larney, J.M. Ewa, J.C. Adjeitey. These are all Infantry.

^h L.A. Okai, D.A. Asare, I.A. Ashitey, V. Coker-Appiah, E.N.N. Dedjoe, J. Acquah, J.Y. Assasie, E.O. Nyante, C.R.R. Tachie-Menson, A.B. Asafu-Adjaye, S.K. Acquah, S.M. Asante, M.K. Gbagonah, W.C.O. Acquaye-Nortey, H.O. Appiah, M.O. Koranteng, F. Hammond.

ⁱ Too numerous to list by name.

TABLE 9.4
ACTIVE AND PASSIVE COLLABORATION OF OFFICERS BY RANK(S) IN 1966 COUP^a

Rank(s) ^b	No. of officers	Collaborators		No. of Ghana based officers	Collaborators	
Lt.-Colonel	16	9	(56.25%)	12	9	(75.00%)
Major	17	7	(41.20%)	13	7	(53.80%)
Major and Lt.-Colonel	33	16	(48.50%)	25	16	(64.00%)
Major and above	38	16	(42.10%)	27	16	(59.25%)

Sources: As for Table 9.2.

^a Excludes categories itemised in Table 9.3, Note a. It should be emphasised that these figures err, if at all, on the conservative side, since if, for instance, two more majors had been privy to the plot, the percentage figure in the bottom right-hand corner of the table would be 66.6 percent.

^b Ranks are based on the seniority dates utilised by the army and not on temporary or acting positions.

affair, indicates that the operation was not limited to a handful of senior officers—as existing accounts of these events claim. Rather, it was one in which a clear majority of Ghana-based middle-ranking and senior officers participated in and approved of. This would suggest that the exposition of shared officer antipathy to the CPP regime described earlier in Chapter 7 was not in any way overrated. Quite clearly, therefore, the earlier analytical treatment of data on the central core of conspirators fails, in itself, to reveal the full extent of tacit and quiescent collaboration offered to the rebels by a large number of ranking officers immediately prior to, and during, the revolt. This, linked with the fact that the leading protagonists of the putsch held a virtual monopoly of the strategic command posts, helps to explain the military success of the coup.

In the preceding chapter, it was shown how “Operation Cold Chop” developed around the interstices of ethnicity, training academies and subsequent job patterns. It is unnecessary, for present purposes, to transcribe exhaustive biographical backgrounds for the outer fringe of collaborators save to say that there were no marked career differences between them and the more active participants. To take just one (but, nonetheless, entirely representative) example from the lieutenant-colonels, we find that Sanni-Thomas came from a poor farming background and had worked as a municipal council clerk before joining the army in 1950 when he was twenty-two. He was an exact contemporary of both Ocran and Kotoka at Teshie and Eaton Hall and he was commissioned on the same date as them before Independence. By September 1961, he was a major; in January 1964, he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel together with, amongst others, Ocran, Amenu, Crabbe, Tevie and Kattah.

As has been seen, there were, in fact, very few officers with parallel or roughly analogous backgrounds to the conspirators and collaborators who were not involved in the 1966 seizure of power. The non-participation of those officers in the rank of major and above can therefore be explained either by their absence from the country or because they held appointments of little or no strategic importance to the coup-makers. In any event, security considerations would have ruled out telling everyone!

As it was—and in view of the large proportion of officers involved—it seems extraordinary that the cabal was not infiltrated and then crushed by any of the intelligence agencies. That this did not happen was due to the fact that many officers were not informed until the very last moment. Those who did know before were trusted Ewes of the inner and intermediate group of rebels. However, it will be recalled that news of a plot had leaked out to Hassan who was ordered to arrest the ringleaders on Nkrumah’s return to Ghana. That opportunity never materialised.

One last interesting feature of the coup was that with Nkrumah, Chief of Defence Staff Aferi and Colonels Bruce and Slater abroad, the hated Hassan under arrest and Barwah dead, the insurgents were able to claim that the coup was effected through orthodox lines of military authority with the distribution and flow of command (for example, from Kotoka to

Afrifa to Seshie, or from Ocran to Dontoh to Achaab, and so on) reflecting adherence to normal hierarchical criteria. Military status norms continued to operate during the coup operation. The arrests of Otu and Hansen weaken this argument but, even in these cases, Ocran's half-heartedness at the Burma Camp operations room might be viewed in terms of rank deference to his superiors. The First Brigade commander subsequently explained his inaction by the proprieties imposed by the military chain of command: "Now that Barwah had been arrested, I was obliged in view of my position and rank to place myself under the direct command of the Naval Commander and the Air Commodore who would act for the Chief of Defence Staff."⁹

In fact, the service chiefs had very little idea of what was going on, their only initiative during the coup being the dispatch of an observation helicopter. This came under fire and rapidly returned to base. The two officers were released from the Recce Regiment guard-room on the evening of 24 February, both affecting irritation that they had not been invited into the ranks of the conspiracy. They were not dismissed by the new NLC junta since, in contrast to Aferi, Barwah, Hassan etc., they had not been closely associated with Nkrumah's party apparatus—and it should be emphasised that the coup was aimed not only at the civilian government but also against the top military hierarchy intimately linked to the regime and against the alternative security formations of the NSS which had usurped the functions of the regular army and police forces.

Thus, while it is true that the shooting of army commander Barwah (and the temporary confinement of the two remaining service chiefs) undermined organisational authority, the bulk of the operation maintained the sanctity of the command structure. And once the action was concluded, the insurgents sought to reintegrate themselves into the military chain of command. In this attempt to legitimate their position in military terms, the most obvious manifestation was the decision to invite Major-General Ankrah, dismissed from the service seven months previously, to become head of state and C-in-C of the armed forces. In the same vein it is also noteworthy that Barwah was buried with full military honours, a decision taken, no doubt, to make amends for his violent and illegal death.

Before turning to investigate the place played by the police in the putsch, a brief description of the force would be appropriate. This is because its inception, development and experience parallel, in many respects, that of the army, thus going some way in explaining its participation.

The Ghana Police Force

The police service traces its origins to Glover's Hausas, a corps established in Lagos in 1865 for the protection of British trading and commercial interests in West Africa. A Gold Coast constabulary, embracing both police and military functions, was created in 1886 but in 1901, with the formation of the West African Frontier Force, military duties were assigned to the

TABLE 9.5
EXPANSION OF GOLD COAST/GHANA POLICE SERVICE, 1946-1966

Year	Police strength
1946	3,400
1950	5,000
1957	6,000
1961	7,500
1966	13,500

Sources: The Ghana Police 1966 (Accra: Ghana Police HQ, 1966); and interview with Inspector-General of Police J.H. Cobbina, Commissioner for Internal Affairs, 6 May 1974.

Gold Coast Regiment and police duties to a reorganised constabulary. Uniformed, but unarmed, Native Authority police forces continued to exist side by side with the constabulary. The Native Authority's main function was limited to enforcing traditional law in the more remote rural areas of the Colony and Northern Territories.¹⁰

From its beginning, the new police force worked in close cooperation with the army, performing both para-military and conventional police duties in such fields as crowd dispersal, riot control, anti-smuggling operations and intelligence. During the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 wars, many policemen were recruited into the Gold Coast Regiment. A large proportion of these rejoined the police following the cessation of hostilities. After Independence, such cooperation continued; while in 1960, the police service and the army saw service alongside each other as part of the UN contingent in the Congo.

Two training schools, one in Accra and one at Elmina, catered for new recruits. In 1959, the impressive Ghana Police College was opened on the outskirts of the capital. Nine years earlier in 1950, the service had been expanded from 4,000 to 5,000 men. As Table 9.5 shows, it had grown to 13,500 by 1966.

In preparation for Independence, a number of black policemen were selected for training at Hendon in Britain (Madjitey in 1951, Amaning in 1952, Harlley in 1953, Deku in 1954 and Nunoo in 1955), to be promoted to assistant superintendent on their return. However, advancement to commissioned status in the Gold Coast constabulary had been available as early as World War I so that the indigenisation of the police service was considerably more advanced than was the case in the army at the time of Independence.

In March 1957, the 6,200 man police force was commanded by seventy-one British officers and forty-five Ghanaians.¹¹ African representation in the

police officer corps (that is inspector and above) was approximately 39 percent compared to only 12 percent in the army. Three years later, about 90 percent of the commissioned officers were Ghanaian; and in 1961, Erasmus Madjitey, a former schoolmaster, became the first African to command the service.¹² By this time—in consonance with Nkrumah's decision to remove General Alexander and his British officers—all commissioned posts, apart from a few communications technicians, were entirely localised.

But an explanation for the discrepancy in the rates of Africanisation between the army and police cannot be linked to differing educational achievements in the two forces because, although the educational level of the army officer corps was aggregately lower than other comparable occupations (for example, the administrative class of the civil service and in the professions), it was markedly superior to that of the police. At Independence, about half Ghana's army officers had obtained the West African School Certificate or equivalent whereas only a tiny fraction—almost certainly less than one tenth—of the country's police officers (all of whom were recruited from the ranks) had completed their secondary education.

The answer to this apparent anomaly is that promotion to supervisory level in the British Police, on which Ghana modelled its own force, traditionally came after many years in the ranks. This was not the case in the army; there transference from the ranks to officer status was the exception and not the rule. A second, but equally important, explanation lay in the British colonial authorities' refusal to lower entry standards for admission to the army officer corps. This was for reasons explained in Chapter 2. The divergent organisational criteria for officer selection in the two forces also explains why the average age of newly commissioned African policemen in the 1950s was about thirty-two years compared to twenty-three years for second-lieutenants in the army.¹³ Most police officers had served at least thirteen years as constables and NCOs. This compared to four or five years for army officers who had first enlisted in the ranks.

Earlier in this study, attention was focused on the army's difficulties in attracting sufficient secondary school graduates, a situation partially attributable to the poor reputation of the military establishment. A similar, but more pervasive, public disapprobation fell on the police force which has always been universally associated with illiteracy and poor educational attainment and with corruption and brutality.¹⁴

To a much greater extent than the army, the Ghana Police was tainted by its association with, and support for, the colonial authorities—especially at the height of agitation for self-government in the late 1940s. During the Accra riots in February 1948, the police fired on a group of discontented ex-servicemen and their supporters when they attempted to march on Christiansborg Castle to deliver a petition to the Governor, Sir Gerald Creasy. The shots were actually fired by a British superintendent; two of the marchers were killed and several were wounded.¹⁵

In his voluminous study of the Ghana Police, Stephen Ankama produces numerous examples, mainly from Dormaa area and Jacobu, of police heavy-

handedness and brutality during the 1950s and early 1960s. He concludes that in many cases the police "had acted ruthlessly, without any regard for the safety of the people, at the sight of the least disturbance."¹⁶

The police service also became identified with the increasingly repressive policies of the CPP, particularly after the introduction of the 1957 Emergency Powers Act and the Preventive Detention Act of the following year. It should be recorded, however, that senior police officers were not always entirely happy with having to execute detention orders issued by politicians. As Harlley later testified:

Things became very difficult indeed to manage, as politicians went about ordering the detention of people by the police. This made me issue instructions that no police officer should detain any person without my authority, and as a result of this many police officers who were uncooperative were expelled from the service.¹⁷

The public's disdain and dislike towards the police was heightened by the officious and languid demeanour of many policemen who, from all reports, appeared to be more concerned with augmenting their salaries by a host of corrupt practices than with upholding the law of the land. This writer's own experiences and observations suggest that there has been little change since the 1960s. Examples of minor bribes and the levying of unlawful tolls on "tro-tro" drivers are so legion as to be commonplace. For a small consideration, traffic offences are forgotten and vehicle registration certificates almost immediately obtained. Failure to "dash"—a mixture of tip and bribe—may result in studied *insouciance* or supine neglect (what the French call *s'en foutisme*) on the one hand, or in abusive shouts, charges of attempted bribery and the most time-consuming, costly and frustrating delays on the other. The graft and venality extend from the top to the bottom: from a commissioner of police obtaining special residence facilities or Ghanaian nationality for a banned Levantine entrepreneur at 100,000 cedis, to a constable accepting a few cans of sardine or Nestlé milk for turning a blind eye to profiteering market-women at Makola market. In Ghanaian eyes, the police and *kalabule* (corruption) are virtually synonymous terms.

An initial impression of local attitudes to the police was conveyed to the author when he was invited to attend the Armed Forces and Police Parade in January 1974, celebrating the second anniversary of Colonel Acheampong's coup. First to arrive at Independence Square were smart units of infantry troops, several armoured squadrons and mounted cavalry. These were hailed with spontaneous and genuine applause (the ageing civil servant seated on my right told me the soldiers were the best in Africa "because they are trained the British way"). But the appearance of the first police detachments was greeted with loud sarcastic cheers, over-exaggerated clapping and wolf-whistles. When one unfortunate policewoman in black skirt and white blouse collapsed in the heat, the stadium erupted in feigned concern, more cheers and hoots of derision. "As you can see," said my Ghanaian companion, "we are also very proud of our police!"

Although police prestige was temporarily enhanced as a consequence of its role in the 1966 coup, its reputation quickly wilted when it became obvious that army-police coalition rule was providing the service with further opportunities for improbity and self-enrichment. As one NLC army member affirmed: "The police have always been associated with corruption. In the NLC days, they were always demanding bribes and gifts . . . sometimes our soldiers would confront them saying 'it was the army who staged the coup and now you're disgracing the government.'" ¹⁸

By February 1966, the grievances of the police closely resembled those of the regular armed forces. As far back as the late 1940s, before becoming leader of government business in 1951, Nkrumah had repeatedly attacked the police in his newspaper (the *Evening News*). On one occasion, he had been successfully sued for libel by the expatriate police chief. He had marked antipathy towards Special Branch, which he maintained was trained "to regard me as a dangerous man whose political views and activities threatened all that was stable and respectable in British eyes." ¹⁹

The police took particular exception to the reorganisation and fragmentation of the police service and to the dismissal of senior officers following the abortive Flagstaff House assassination attempt. According to Harley, the actions taken by Nkrumah against the service "utterly humiliated and rendered it impotent." ²⁰ As with army officers who harboured a sense of outrage over the creation of the Guard Regiment, regular police personnel resented that several of the specialised and sensitive police departments—Special Branch, the border guards and Nkrumah's special police guard for instance—had been hived off and placed under the direct control of the president.

As in the army, a sentiment of relative deprivation and status insecurity permeated the force. The personnel of the former police departments received higher salaries and more generous fringe benefits than their erstwhile colleagues; whilst it was commonly and justifiably believed that some policemen—mainly at police HQ and the regional commands—had been planted by Flagstaff House for the purposes of spying. ²¹ These anxieties were enhanced from April 1965 when the Police Service Act, abolishing the Police Service Commission and making the president the sole appointing and dismissing authority, came into force. By such organisational and statutory measures, Nkrumah hoped to protect himself from his own police.

In view of putative police complicity in the assassination attempts against the president and the dubious political loyalties of some senior police officers to the government, it was widely assumed that the powers of the Police Service Act would be used to make the service more zealous on behalf of the regime. By the beginning of 1966, it now seems reasonably certain, both Harley and Deku were doubtful about their security of tenure in the top two police posts. They had good reason to believe this.

In December 1965, Kwame Nkrumah had ordered an enquiry into smuggling operations involving a European diamond dealer and a number of Ghanaians. Geoffrey Bing, Nkrumah's British adviser and one time

Attorney-General in Ghana, was asked to investigate racketeering in precious metals and gems. Bing discovered that Commissioner of Police Harlley had revoked a deportation order on the said European and that he had simultaneously attempted to conceal the fact by tampering with Special Branch records. Deku's name was also implicated in the affair. Days before the February rebellion, rumours—since confirmed by Nkrumah²²—had reached the police chiefs that Osagyefo's first action on his return from the Far East would have been their arrest on charges of complicity in diamond smuggling. The possibility of being exposed, dismissed and incarcerated in one of Ghana's gaols must have acted as a powerful catalyst in the timing of the coup operation. As will be noted below, similar considerations influenced the actions of Lieutenant-Colonel Kotoka and Captain Afrifa, both of whom felt there was little time to lose.

The Role of the Police in the Putsch

During the period from September 1965, when large numbers of troops were brought under the direct command of the inner circle of conspirators for the first time, to February 1966, Harlley and Deku drew up plans for coordinating police operations with those of the army. Captain Kwashie had acted as the intermediary between the army and police officers; but it was not until the police chiefs and Kotoka met in Accra on 15 February that the date for action was fixed.

Quite apart from the strategic advantage expected to accrue from Nkrumah's absence abroad, several other practical considerations were decisive in the timing of the revolt. It seems that Kotoka had mislaid a diary containing names and rough notes (in an easily decipherable code) on the coup operation. Fearing its discovery, as well as the possibility of leaks from the steadily expanding group of fellow-conspirators, he was determined to proceed with the plot as swiftly as possible.²³ As it subsequently turned out, Kotoka's anxieties were well-founded. When the Director of Military Intelligence was arrested in the early hours of 24 February, a list was found in his possession containing the names of suspected officers—Kotoka, Addy, Kwashie and Afrifa—who were to be arrested on Nkrumah's return from Peking. Another intelligence report, submitted by Hassan to Barwah in early February, had suggested that three Ewe officers—Kotoka, Amenu and Kwashie—were at the centre of subversive activities in the army. Incredibly, since Kotoka commanded a brigade, the report had to be shown to him.²⁴

Following an angry confrontation with a civilian security official of Ambrose Yankey's Special Intelligence Unit, Captain Afrifa also had cause for concern. The altercation arose when the security officer, armed with a letter from Colonel Hassan, arrived in Kumasi to arrest several civilians. Afrifa challenged the civilian's authority to lead regular soldiers in an arrest party and ordered the commandeered troops back to barracks. The incident was reported to Kotoka (who backed his subordinate) and then to Brigadier Barwah, as a result of which Afrifa was due to be court-martialed on 25 February. In

the manner of the police chiefs, the Second Brigade commander and his young staff officer acted in pre-emptive self-defence. There could be no question of agreeing to Ocran's last minute request for a postponement.

On the eve of the coup, the nationally based police service was organised and administered on the basis of ten regions (Greater Accra, Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Eastern, Volta, Western, Central, Northern, Upper and Tema),²⁵ each under the command of an assistant commissioner. With an establishment of 712 officers and officer cadets and approximately 13,000 sergeants, corporals and constables (see Appendix C), the police force was almost exactly the same size as the army. There was also an armoured unit, equipped with twelve Ferret vehicles. The unit had been established in 1958. According to the annual police report for 1959, the armoured section "had already proved its operational value in several trouble spots, and has been a marked deterrent to subversive elements during election campaigns."²⁶ In many ways, then, the army and police exhibited similarities, particularly where it concerned their overlapping role and experience in internal security duties.

The coup could not have succeeded without the support or acquiescence of the army, but the police played an important (and in many ways decisive) part in Nkrumah's ouster. Not only did the seeds of the plot spring from the top two police officials, but in the execution of the rebellion the police also performed a leading role. It was Harley who was responsible for the detailed coordination of police operations with those of the army. The police chiefs' familiarity with the state security apparatus, together with Harley's private intelligence system, provided the rebels with important details about the deployment of National Security Service units and the probable popular reaction to the coup. As Nkrumah himself admitted, "the police alone possessed the necessary vital information needed for . . . success."²⁷ In addition, the service's communications system, linking the 198 stations and 176 posts of the 46 police districts, was crucially important in neutralising potential opposition during the army-police putsch. It was also important in the immediate aftermath of the coup when police headquarters in Accra—where Harley was very much in charge—functioned as the operational base of the NLC.

The army was responsible for tackling Nkrumah's Guard Regiment and for seizing control of the capital's key buildings and government agencies. However, as Luttwak has remarked, administrations are composed of men, not bricks and mortar,²⁸ and it was to the police that the task of capturing senior CPP figures was allotted. A synchronised country-wide swoop on the leading officials and important supporters of the regime checked opposition before it could be mobilised. Hours before the soldiers began their assault on Flagstaff House, Commissioner Harley assembled his senior subordinates and issued instructions for the arrest of all CPP ministers, MPs, regional and district commissioners, propaganda secretaries, as well as CPP youth, women and Workers' Brigade activists. As elements of the Second Brigade moved south, ostensibly on a training exercise, so the

policemen at first masked their clandestine intentions with the pretext that CPP politicians were to be offered "protection" in the event of popular dissatisfaction over the budget. Police leave was cancelled and every station was alerted for trouble. The security briefing to the senior policemen was official and above-board; but when Harlley revealed his real objectives, the action was enthusiastically endorsed by his colleagues.²⁹

Very few individuals escaped the police drag-net. In contrast to the army (then stationed only in Accra-Tema, Elmina, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi), the police were deployed throughout the country. Unlike a soldier, a constable was usually recruited from the area in which he served; he was thus in much closer touch with the local population than were the soldiers who lived in barracks. Left to the army alone, the task of rounding up opposition would have presented formidable logistical and identification problems—quite apart from weakening the rebels' forces in the strategically more important operations elsewhere. On the other hand, the police knew exactly where everyone lived and how best to effect the arrest of the CPP politicians on Harlley's list.

To sum up: this endeavour to illuminate the events of 23/24 February aimed at highlighting a distinctive characteristic of the coup that has been largely ignored to date. This concerns the critical role of the police. If there was any single figure who was most prominent in the sequence of events that ultimately led to Nkrumah's downfall, that man was Harlley. From his elevated position of trust, the police chief made good use of the considerable resources at his disposal—a country-spanning force the size of the army with a sophisticated communications system to match, an independent intelligence network and close personal involvement in Nkrumah's security machine. An expert in the protection of the regime, the former head of Special Branch knew how to strike at its weakest points. The army could have staged the coup alone but the cooperation of the two forces—facilitated as it was by many similarities in structural format, training and experience—ensured the immediate paralysis of the CPP, thus contributing in no small manner to the relative bloodlessness and celerity of the coup.

Notes

1. A.A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup* (London: Frank Cass, 1967); A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968); P. Barker, *Operation Cold Chop* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1969); and L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1972).

2. Several hours after Addy's troops left Tamale, Ocran sent a wire to Kotoka saying: "Ref. bush training. Regret not contacted all commanders. Suggest exercise postponed. Ack." He received a curt reply: "No postponement. Exercise will proceed." Interview, Brigadier A.K. Kattah, 23 May 1975.

3. J. Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (London: BBC, 1977), p.100.

4. *Daily Graphic*, 25 February 1966.

5. Nkrumah's incredulity when he was given the news by his Chinese hosts is described in his book, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), pp.9-10.

6. Casualty figures from *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 2,3 (October 1969), p.16.
7. Interviews, Brigadier A.K. Kattah, 23 May 1975; Colonel R.E.A. Kotei, 9 April 1974; and Colonel H.O. Appiah, 6 February 1974.
8. Major-Generals D.K. Addo and D.C.K. Amenu; Brigadiers D.A. Asare and A.K. Kattah; Colonels J.M. Ewa, J.P.K. Mensah-Brown, H.O. Appiah and C.R.R. Tachie-Menson; and Major F. Hammond. Interview dates listed in Sources and Bibliography section.
9. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken*, pp.64–65.
10. F.G. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1965), pp.205–206. In 1960, the Native Authority was absorbed into the regular police force as the escort police.
11. J.M. Lee, *African Armies and Civil Order* (London: Chatto & Windus for The Institute of Strategic Studies, 1969), p.44.
12. Madjitey was favoured over Colonel A.E. Young, then the City of London's commissioner of police who was available for secondment. Nkrumah's cabinet argued over the appointment for hours. While there was general agreement that local police officers were not sufficiently experienced, the government felt that it would alienate the police if it brought in a senior officer from outside. In consequence, Madjitey was appointed.
13. See Chapter 6, Table 6.1, and Appendix B.
14. The low status of the police service in the 1950s and early 1960s was revealed in a study of students' career aspirations and preferences: P. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p.269. As in the army, and for the same reasons, there was a disproportionately high representation of Ewes in the supervisory levels of the police.
15. Refer back to Chapter 2 and the evidence from the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast* (London: HSMO, 1948).
16. S.A. Ankama, *The Police and the Maintenance of Law and Order in Ghana*, London University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1967, p.328.
17. Dr. Danquah: *Detention and Death in Nsawam Prison* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1967), p.54.
18. Interview, Colonel E.A. Yeboah, 12 August 1975. Another NLC member has also criticised the police in his account of army-police rule: "This alliance of the military and police gives the police the opportunity to become more powerful, and some seize the opportunity to take the law into their own hands . . . not a few police officers take advantage of their unique position to indulge in both open and covert bribery, collection of money and other acts . . . the police generally succumb to the temptation to make money, however little, to augment their pay." A.K. Ocran, *Politics and the Sword* (London: Rex Collings, 1977), p.77.
19. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p.40.
20. Inspector-General Harlley's statement in *Ghana Reborn* (New York: Ghana Information Services, December 1966), p.12.
21. Interview, Inspector-General of Police J.H. Cobbina, 20 May 1974.
22. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, pp.42–43. See, also, *West Africa*, 31 August 1968.
23. The story of the missing notebook was given renewed prominence by Conor Cruise O'Brien in *The Observer*, 21 January 1979.
24. Interview, Lt.-Colonel I.K. Akuoku, Director of Military Intelligence, 21 August 1975.
25. With regional headquarters respectively in Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani, Koforidua, Ho, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Tamale, Bolgatanga and Tema. Tema has never actually

been one of Ghana's administrative regions but since 1964, due to its important port and industrial facilities, it has had the same status as a regional police centre.

26. *Ghana Police Service: Annual Report for the Year ended 31st December 1959* (Accra: Ghana Police Headquarters, 1960), p.14.

27. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p.44.

28. E. Luttwak, *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook* (London: Penguin, 1968), p.104.

29. It is interesting to note that the police set about their task in much the same fashion as in previous internal exercises—as, for instance, in the 1963 state of emergency. What is more, and to an even greater degree than in the army, the police role in the coup was enacted with strict adherence to routine principles of hierarchy. Since he was the most senior officer in the police force, there were no superiors for Harley to by-pass. There was no necessity, therefore, to kill or imprison any policemen and no attempts were made by subordinates to challenge Harley's authority. In short, the evidence shows that while there were some breaches in the army system of command and control, the overall impression is of the remarkable continuity of organisational norms throughout the revolt.

10

The National Liberation Council: Consolidation, Composition and Coalition

A number of studies on the NLC have already been written, mostly as articles in journals or in collected essays. There are, additionally, several excellent dissertations on the regime.¹ For this reason, and in order to keep this book within manageable proportions, a detailed discussion of the Council's ideological orientations or policy directions is not engaged in here. Some space is necessarily devoted to the installation of the junta and to some consequences of the revolt on the wider political environment; however, the primary concern in this chapter, and especially in the next, is the effect of the coup on the army itself.

The major focus in the following pages is on the establishment and composition of the army-police junta. In the preceding section, it was shown how the officers were successful in striking against the alternative security forces ranged against them. But the most serious problem faced by rebels after the seizure of office is the question of popular acceptability. In this chapter, therefore, we will begin by examining the reaction of both Ghana's indigenous population and the international community to the change of regime. One question asked is to what extent did the policies and actions of the CPP contribute to the popularity or otherwise of the putsch? Were the rebels' anticipations concerning domestic opinion important or decisive in the coup? And what support, if any, could be expected from beyond Ghana's borders?

A final area of enquiry to be considered here concerns the junta's immediate political objective of broadening its power base and widening its public appeal. The evidence available suggests that the new army and police rulers came to office with little in the way of a comprehensive programme, save to destroy the CPP, enhance the position of the regular forces and pave the way for the restoration to power of groups and interests that had been hostile to Nkrumah. In this, the soldiers and policemen were heavily dependent on the opposition intelligentsia (with whom in many ways they identified) which had been systematically excluded from political office and

influence since the early 1950s. NLC creations such as the Economic Committee, the Centre for Civic Education and various judicial commissions of investigation were staffed mainly by individuals who had been members or close sympathisers of the opposition United Party. But military rule also resulted in greatly increased influence for the civil service bureaucracy whose structural position vis-à-vis the CPP politicians had been in many respects the same as that of the officers.²

Local Reaction to the Coup

From all reports, there can be little doubt that the putsch was received with overwhelming and spontaneous jubilation from the mass of the population. Even before the battle for Flagstaff House was over, crowds were fêting any army or police vehicle that appeared. Noisy demonstrations, white powder (the traditional sign of victory in battle) and huge placards with slogans such as "No More Animal Farm" verified the mood of a grateful and liberated people. Astonished officers and soldiers were stopped by mobs in the street and lifted shoulder-high to the nearest bar for libations. One officer, a lieutenant in 1966, told of his own experiences:

It was like a carnival, everyone was cheering and dancing. Two days later even, my *Landrover* was overtaken by a taxi and forced to the side. The driver gave me a cedi and a bottle of gin. Another donated four cedils for the boys to have a drink. Countless number of women arrived at Burma Camp with chickens, yams and all types of foodstuffs for the troops.³

Foreign correspondents' reports and numerous other oral evidence from a wide variety of sources confirm that the coup was a genuinely popular one. Nevertheless, after fifteen years of CPP rule, it seemed difficult to digest that the political stars of the Nkrumahs, Botsios and Eduseis had fallen overnight; and there was at least one story—from Ashanti New Town—of pandemonium when a rumour circulated that the whole affair was a trick by the president to test the loyalty of his people. What at first appears surprising is not that the coup took place, but that the civilian administration and its integral wings collapsed so suddenly. Was the mafficking and characteristic abandoned gaiety of the Ghanaians an accurate barometer of the country's political mood at the beginning of 1966, or was it indicative of something more cynical in Ghana's political culture? The answer probably lies somewhere in-between.

The origins and rise to power of Nkrumah's CPP have been the subject of extensive scholarly study and analysis.⁴ Therefore, they will not be dealt with at length here. However, some commentary, at least where it relates to the conspirators' expectations regarding the local and international response to the revolt, is called for.

In his *Politics of the Sword*, Major-General Ocran has written that "No military intervention is attempted unless there is a prospect of popular support from the masses."⁵ These words were written a decade after the

coup. Nonetheless, it is quite clear that the army and police rebels gave considerable thought to the matter. Harlley's private intelligence system, and his access to official regional reports, pointed to popular discontent with the declining state of the economy. As far back as April 1965, the police chief had prepared a paper on Ghana's economy with the help of two civilians, R.S. Amegashie, then director of Legon's School of Administration, and E.N. Omaboe, director of the Central Bureau of Statistics.⁶ Harlley made use of the report in his abortive attempts to enlist the support of Generals Otu and Ankrah before their premature retirement in 1965. On 22 February, two days before the coup, Finance Minister Kwasi Amoaka-Atta presented the annual budget to Parliament. This revealed a continuing deterioration in Ghana's economic condition and it introduced stringent measures to deal with the situation.

During the first spate of post-coup speeches from members of the coalition junta, significant emphasis was placed on the political and economic "crimes" allegedly committed by the former regime. General Ankrah, who became NLC chairman, concentrated on Nkrumah's economic policies:

He brought Ghana to the brink of economic disaster by expansion, waste and unwise spending. Incomes are falling, the cost of living is rising, unemployment has struck many families . . . foreign reserves of the country have all disappeared as a result of the implementation of costly prestige projects and undertakings, uncontrolled expenditure by the ex-President and unnecessary costly foreign adventures aimed at enhancing his own personal prestige. . . . Most of us cannot get ordinary food to buy and eat.⁷

There is more than an element of truth in this catalogue of criticism and similar diatribes from other NLC members to explain why the coup was widely popular and so successful. Economic stagnation caused by the unfavourable terms of international trade, the profligacy and venality of the CPP leadership and the inefficiency of the state industries under its control—all characterised by a growing scarcity of goods, inflation (the national consumer price index rose by 65 percent between March 1963 and December 1965), a worsening balance of payments and unemployment⁸—combined to undercut whatever genuine support the regime once had. Although the deterioration of the economy was probably largely beyond the control of any government at a time when the world cocoa price fell from £400 a ton in the mid-1950s to under £100 a ton by 1965–1966, public discontent was fuelled by the "dash," kickbacks and conspicuous consumption and corruption associated with the governing party.⁹ By the beginning of 1966, the declining state of the economy had generated grievances in many sectors of society including cocoa farmers, urban workers, businessmen, consumers, the young unemployed, civil servants and, of course, the military.

But it was not just a question of economics. The seizure of control by the army and police was further facilitated by widespread popular indignation regarding the political complexion of the regime. In the final pre-Independence election of 1956, the CPP won almost 70 percent of the legislative

seats (71 out of 104) and 57 percent of votes cast. Following Independence, the CPP-dominated National Assembly increasingly fell back on coercion to stifle and eradicate organised opposition. The Avoidance of Discrimination and the Emergency Powers Acts of 1957, the July 1958 Preventive Detention Act and the Constitution (Amendment) Act of March 1959 circumscribed opposition parties and led to the imprisonment of hundreds of critics who were gaoled without trial. The February 1965 death of Dr Danquah, whilst in solitary confinement at Nsawam prison, emphasised the petty vindictiveness of the regime.

The republican constitution of 1960 created an even more highly centralised state; and in 1962, Kwame Nkrumah was proclaimed president for life. If a genuinely free election had been held after 1960, the degree of public disenchantment might have been displayed; but the constitutional referendum of 1964—which established the CPP as the sole legal party—was marred by manipulation and the parliamentary elections scheduled for 1965 never took place. Instead, the Voting Acts Amendment ensured that CPP nominees were automatically “elected” by simple declaration. Terrified of assassination, Osagyefo withdrew even deeper into the inner sanctum of Flagstaff House where his vision of reality became increasingly distorted by sychophants, internal party disputes and the Mumbo Jumbo and counsel of fetish priests.¹⁰

Having created the conditions for its perpetual structural survival, it was only through a sophisticated system of party patronage and an enforced consensus that a semblance of support could be maintained by the regime. Ultimately, the durability of the CPP depended upon its ability in meeting effectively the economic demands of its supporters and, crucially, as subsequent events were to demonstrate, on the loyalty of the security forces. But as legitimate means for questioning the policies and priorities of the government disappeared and as the popular base of the party withered away, opposition was channelled towards illegal and more violent methods. As the autonomy of the civil service and the judiciary was eroded,¹¹ a general recognition dawned that a major change in the political orientation of the country could only be effected by extra-constitutional means and that the military was probably the only body capable of such action. Author interviews with senior civil servants and Legon lecturers eight years later suggested that the suitability of such direct means had already gained a degree of public currency by January 1966—especially, as has been previously intimated, after the coup in neighbouring Nigeria.

In some states, civil resistance to armed intervention has checked the political ambitions of soldiers.¹² But in Ghana, no resistance to the rebels was offered by the two million card-carrying members of the CPP, all of whom were pledged by oath to support Nkrumah. Zanlerigu's POGR battalion resisted for a while but this was largely because they were at first unaware of the rebel numbers and were anyway acting in self-defence. After Kotoka's ultimatum, Zanlerigu quickly pledged the loyalty of his forces to the new regime. As in January 1972, when Acheampong toppled Busia's

Progress government, messages of support and congratulations flowed in from the universities, the unions, religious organisations, farmers, traders and traditional rulers (most of this last group explained their abrupt switch in allegiance by declaring that it is always the duty of the chiefs to support the government of the day—a distinctly Hobbesian concept of obligation where political support evaporates if the ruler is unable to exert authority). Promises of fealty were also forthcoming from other CPP organisations including Musa Kuti's brigaders, several thousand of whom, just a fortnight earlier, had paid homage to the president in an impressive march-past at Black Star Square, commemorating the fifteenth anniversary of Nkrumah's release from James Fort Prison.¹³

Kwame Nkrumah's calls from exile in Conakry (where Sékou Touré proclaimed him co-president of Guinea) for counteraction fell on deaf ears. No element of the party resisted and Alex Quaison-Sackey, Nkrumah's foreign minister, was typical of many former CPP officials in rejecting his leader and pledging loyalty to the new regime. One of Chinua Achebe's almost prophetic novels provides a pithy analogue to post-coup Ghana:

Overnight everyone began to shake their heads at the excesses of the last regime, at its graft, oppression and corrupt government: newspapers, the radio, the hitherto silent intellectuals and civil servants—everybody said what a terrible lot; and it became public opinion the next morning. And these were the same people that only the other day had owned a thousand names of adulation, whom praise-singers followed with song and talking-drum wherever they went.¹⁴

It is not difficult to explain such behaviour. Quite apart from the circumstances contributing to popular, albeit subdued, dissatisfaction with the CPP noted above, the fluidity and shallowness of party political loyalties in Ghana ensures that once a government is unable to "perform," in other words to disburse the benefits of office to its supporters and followers, the contractual ties between leaders and led are dissolved.

In a study of the people of Swedru in the Agona area of south-central Ghana, Owusu has argued that support for the government of the day is based on lines of patronage in what is essentially a world of distributive politics.¹⁵ This support grinds to a halt when the perquisites of power come to an end. The relationship holds so long as the patron honours his material and economic obligations, and the client his duty to vote for his patron at elections and carry out various other supportive roles. For Owusu, economic necessity—rather than ideological considerations, loyalty or charisma—constitutes the bond of the follower to the political leader or party.

In the last resort, the CPP despite its nation-wide network of organisations and despite its manifest appeal, disintegrated in 1966 because of its inability, among other things, to recruit members having primarily normative or ideological commitments to the party. Nkrumah's regime was over-dependent on party patronage and instrumental popular mobilisation. When the basis of patronage suffered, the government lost its friends. Many individuals

identified with the regime and provided the leadership with ritualistic acclaim whilst it was politic to do so simply because it could affect their life style in drastic ways. And the evidence suggests that the coup-makers were sustained by a keen sentience of the essentially instrumental nature of politics in Ghana, of the local predilection for cheering in the same direction as the wind.

To some extent, the basis of support for the new army-police junta was also instrumental. The Ghanaian populace switched its support because, *inter alia*, it would have been politically dangerous and economically improvident to do otherwise. There was, to be sure, widespread local dissatisfaction with Nkrumah's rule by 1966, but the approbation which greeted the coup-makers had another, baser, dimension, namely a powerful desire to be on the winning side. The maximisation of economic gains, jobs and allied benefits resulted—and was seen to result—from supporting those in a position to control and allocate the resources of the state rather than backing those who were formerly able to do so. The contention here is that the conspirators were able to draw encouragement from this aspect of the political culture, not only in the rebellion itself but also in imposing their authority afterwards.

This widespread tendency in the new states of Africa has been observed by Coleman in his essay on political parties.¹⁶ He concludes that the image of consequences of not belonging to the majority party "is sufficiently unattractive to provoke a 'bandwagon' or 'wave of the future' psychology on the part of electors."¹⁷ It can be argued that such an explanation of political behaviour, rooted as it is in a labyrinthine series of mutual obligations, is the tangible counterpart of Hobbes's social contract already alluded to. Only by the present power of the sovereign is the pact made valid. So if that power is destroyed, or effectively usurped,

there is no further protection of Subjects in their loyalty; then is the Commonwealth dissolved, and everyman at liberty to protect himselfe by such courses as his own discretion shall suggest unto him.¹⁸

International Reaction to the Revolt

There is also the question of foreign complicity in the coup together with the conspirators' expectations about the international community's response to a change of regime in Ghana. One theory of conspiracy sees all the ills of the Third World as visited on her by outside forces. Fitch and Oppenheimer regard military intervention in Africa as part and parcel of such an international neo-colonialist strategy.¹⁹ For them, foreign agents lurk threateningly behind many coups; whilst Huberman and Sweezy, in the foreword to the book, have little hesitation in believing that the CIA "evidently acted through the army and the police."²⁰ Writing under the hospitable roof of Touré's Guinea in 1967, Nkrumah claimed that the governments of the United States, Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany were all implicated in the plot to overthrow his regime. He even

mentioned an offer of \$13m allegedly made to the officers by the US ambassador, Franklin Williams.²¹ And in the account of his years in Ghana, Geoffrey Bing also points to the serious possibility of foreign intrigue and intervention in the February action, concluding that the US, Britain, France, Israel and West Germany all had motives for such interference.²²

Not unexpectedly, First also posed the question: "Were the Western powers accomplices in the Ghana coup?"²³ She came to the conclusion that, even if the West's intelligence agencies were not directly involved, no particularly deep international conspiracy was required since Ghana was inescapably susceptible to external pressures by virtue of her profound dependence on outside economic forces. She believed that Nkrumah was brought down as much by the plummeting price of cocoa as by his army and police officers, arguing that the internal political tensions and economic fragility of "developing" states are deliberately exploited by foreign powers for their own ends.

But caution is called for in moving from generalities to specifics in accepting ideologically fashionable interpretations about clandestine foreign operations. There is no data to demonstrate Roger Murray's view that the US State Department deliberately undermined the Ghanaian economy in order to topple Nkrumah,²⁴ just as the arrival of Soviet KGB agents to guard Acheampong immediately after the 1972 coup tells us little or nothing about the USSR's role in ousting Busia.²⁵ While it is true that the political objectives of the West and the aims of the army and police coincided, there is no proof of collusion.

A decade ago, in May 1978, the *New York Times*, quoting "first-hand intelligence sources," claimed that the CIA was involved in advising and supporting the conspirators without prior approval from a high-level inter-agency group in Washington which monitors secret CIA activities. These sources allegedly told the newspaper that the monitoring group, then known as the 303 Committee, had rejected previous CIA requests to plot against Nkrumah by using a small squad from the agency's Special Operations Group to attack the Chinese embassy during the coup and kill everyone there.²⁶ The *Times* of London also took up the story. However, the link with foreign agencies was strongly refuted by Afrifa in a letter to the newspaper in 1978.²⁷

Persons serving in diplomatic missions in Ghana at that time formed the impression that some cautious approaches to several Western missions were made by Harley, but that these were smartly rebuffed. The possibility that Police Commissioner Harley was acting as an *agent provocateur* on Nkrumah's behalf was entertained by some Accra-based diplomats—as was the notion that the police chief's manifest intentions were deadly serious. In the event, the putsch did not come as a bolt out of the blue to a number of foreign governments.²⁸ It is also pertinent to record that army officers and anti-CPP politicians interviewed by this author pointed out it was a fairly widely held view that, in the event of a military takeover, increased financial and technical assistance would be forthcoming from the

West. Reports from Ghana's Central Bureau of Statistics, and figures compiled by Adomakoh, suggest that this assumption was both correct and calculated.²⁹ After the coup, relations with the West improved considerably, whilst those with the socialist states deteriorated.

As Fiji's Colonel Rabuka discovered to his cost in 1987, recognition from abroad is one of the major elements in the general process of establishing the authority of new governments. This is particularly so where the former administration has been removed by force. Military coups are by definition illegal; for this reason, diplomatic recognition may well be crucial to the political survival of a new regime. In this respect, therefore, the immediate priority is the maintenance of ties with indispensable sources of aid and with immediate neighbours. Every new military government in Ghana—Ankrah's, Acheampong's, Akuffo's and Rawlings's—has quickly initiated diplomatic activity to ensure early recognition from donor states and bordering republics. In 1966, the NLC obtained diplomatic recognition from the major Western powers in the first week of March, by which time many African countries (including Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Togo, Tunisia and Senegal) had done the same. In a number of cases, early recognition of the NLC was not unconnected with Nkrumah's secret training camps, established, as noted in Chapter 7, to export revolution to nearby African states. Such seals of approval had obvious political consequences on the domestic front, assisting, as it did, to ensure the acquiescence of the Ghanaian public.

Of course, foreign governments, like Ghana's indigenous populace, also wanted to be on the winning side. Thus, the concept of economic and political instrumentalism at the local level, of voters or clients selling their support to the highest bidder or patron,—and of Hobbes's contract between sovereign and subject—might plausibly and profitably be extended to encompass the international response to inchoate *de facto* regimes. As with the individual subject, state rulers cannot be expected to remain loyal to deposed leaders abroad,

For the Sovereign is the publique Soule, giving Life and Motion to the Common-wealth; which expiring, the Members are governed by it no more than the Carcasse of a man, by his departed (though Immortall) Soule.³⁰

Composition of the Council: *Ehyen Yeka No Afanu*³¹

Shooting in the vicinity of Flagstaff House and the adjacent Kanda estate was still in progress when the army-police coalition that came to be called the National Liberation Council was established as the ruling body in Ghana. The first informal meeting was convened at police HQ with only three members of the ruling group present: Harlley, Kotoka and Afrifa. The initial proclamation of 24 February named four army members (Major-General Ankrah, Lieutenant-Colonels Kotoka and Ocran and Captain Afrifa) and three police officers (Commissioner Harlley, Deputy Commissioner B.A. Yakubu and Assistant Commissioner J.E.O. Nunoo).

It was not until almost a week later, on 1 March, that Deputy Commissioner Deku was brought on to the Council in recognition of his part in organising the coup. Perhaps surprisingly, he was not automatically included in the first NLC list since at the time of the coup he was not in Ghana but with Nkrumah's entourage in the Far East—in charge, ironically, of the president's security. Yakubu and Nunoo, who carried out Harlley's orders on the eve of the rebellion but who had no part in its early planning, owed their membership to the key role of the police in the putsch, to their own seniority and to Harlley's insistence that the police—as prime movers of the coup—should have equal representation on the Council. Army-police parity was formally enshrined in NLC Decree 1. One interesting feature of the decision to give equal weighting to the two services is that, at that time at least, there seems to have been no dissent on the issue from the army. In fact, a popular soldiers' song, *Soja Mpanyinfuo Moma Yen Daase* (translated from Twi as "Military Leaders, Accept our Praises"), which materialised soon after the coup, accepted the police as equals:

Hi! Listeners! Amen
 Hi! Listeners! Amen
 Army Chiefs! Accept our praises
 Police Chiefs! Accept our praises
 Hi! Listeners! Amen³²

In contrast to the policemen on the NLC, the army members were not drawn solely from the top ranks. Before the Council began promoting themselves, the army was represented by an acting major, two lieutenant-colonels and a major-general. With the exception of Ankrah, these officers were included because they had been prime movers in the coup's execution.

But the army members bore only a partial resemblance to the central group of conspirators who had planned the rebellion. This was particularly evident where it concerned the decision to invite Ankrah to become chairman of the Council. Both Harlley and Kotoka had declined the position in the hope that the rank, status and popular esteem enjoyed by the former army boxing champion, the only Ghanaian holder of the Military Cross (and a man who had fathered twenty-two children by four wives) would unite the armed forces behind the coup and swing potentially recalcitrant officers whose seniority over NLC members might otherwise have impaired relations between the junta and the wider military establishment. It is pertinent to record that the "swing man" phenomenon has been a recurrent feature in African coups: in March 1967, Colonel Juxon-Smith was recalled from Camberley in England to head the National Reformation Council in Sierra Leone; General Siyad Barre was not involved in the 1969 Somali coup, yet, like Nigeria's Ironsi three years earlier, he took command when success was assured.

Thus, Ankrah's appointment should be viewed as an attempt to re-establish the military chain of command in the wake of an action that had challenged organisational imperatives. By entrusting the leadership to some-

one who had not directly participated in the coup but who did, nonetheless, command considerable respect among officers and ranks alike, the junta was initially able to rally the army to its flag.

Some speculation suggests that Ankrah was privy to the plot beforehand, that Harlley had informed him of the plan in advance and invited him to join the rebels at police HQ on 24 February.³³ There is no evidence for believing that this was so. It is possible that Ankrah was aware of a plot, but it was his willingness to support the conspirators' ambitions in 1965 that added impetus to his selection as NLC chairman. *Prima facie* impressions, corroborated by author interviews with several of the military coup-makers (Kattah, Amenu and Okai), indicate that the proposal was put to Ankrah soon after the capitulation of Zanlerigu's Guard Regiment. The general's response was extempore and brief: "Mafé"—which in the Ga language means "I will do it."

Ex-Chief of Defence Staff Major-General Stephen Otu was considered an inappropriate choice since his ambivalence in the June 1965 discussions to unseat Nkrumah (in stark contrast to Ankrah's response) had earned him the unenviable appellation of "Salvation Army General" within some army circles. Very few officers of this writer's acquaintance regarded Otu as an appropriate or competent CDS; he was seen as a stolid and unimaginative man who owed his rank to seniority rather than ability. It was also felt that he had done little to convey the grievances of the regular armed forces to Nkrumah and that he was out of touch with his men. "He was not," as one retired colonel put it, "a soldier's soldier." Such considerations, together with rumours that the former CDS had become senile since his enforced retirement, explain why Ankrah, rather than Otu, was chosen.

Janowitz has drawn attention to the fact that with a military takeover of political power in new states "an interpenetration of the army and the police, at the highest levels, tends to develop."³⁴ The equal balance of the two services on the Council has already been explained, but it confirms Janowitz's view that career police officers are usually quite prepared to align themselves with a military oligarchy. That this is true in Ghana, even when the police are not co-authors of a coup, was confirmed when the military reintervened in 1972. As John Cobbina, the Inspector-General of Police and Commissioner for Internal Affairs in the National Redemption Council explained, "We did not help to overthrow Dr Busia. There was a change of government and we came in to preserve law and order. That is our job."³⁵ However, by their precipitate defection to the rebel forces, the police implicitly encouraged the illegitimate seizure of power whilst simultaneously fulfilling the role of ready-made partners.

There are, however, a number of practical advantages to such a partnership. First and foremost is the use that can be made of the political intelligence activities and manpower of the police. The police network of countrywide stations and posts can be tapped by the military and synchronised with the machinery of Military Intelligence, adding greatly to the regime's sum of information and thus facilitating improved communications between

governors and governed. That this aspect was important in Ghana between 1966-1969 has been verified by one of the NLC members:

The police, with their intimate knowledge of the country's immediate political history and personalities, of labour and other organisations, can provide invaluable advice on many matters that would not normally be available to a purely military government.³⁶

With their knowledge of the law, precedents and local customs, the police may also act as a useful restraint on what might otherwise be impulsive and rash behaviour on the part of army officers used to giving commands. Police links with the local population will also project a familiar face at the district level. In this way, the police hierarchy provided a functional alternative to the country-spanning CPP political machine. Finally, it is important in this respect to re-emphasise that the training and experience of the army and police forces are frequently similar in countries like Ghana where the military's role is geared to internal security duties rather than to defence against external aggressors and where the constabulary exhibits noticeable para-military characteristics. The overlapping role of the two security forces was underlined after the 1966 coup when the NLC decreed that soldiers above the rank of sergeant would perform certain police functions including crime detection and prevention.³⁷

Nevertheless, despite the benefits of increased cooperation, a military regime may in some ways suffer from its association with the police. Attention has already been drawn to the frequent embarrassment felt by the NLC's army members occasioned by the venality and opportunism of the police force. Examples of policemen using their positions to indulge in bribery, black marketeering, smuggling, debt collecting for friends and other forms of unscrupulousness during the NLC era were legion. The advantages of having the police in the government probably outweighed the disadvantages, but the appointment of a policeman to head the Council would have displayed a singular lack of political *savoir faire*. In view of public attitudes to the police, it was considered inexpedient for Harlley to take the top seat. Instead, and in recognition of his pivotal role in initiating and master-minding the rebellion, the police chief was appointed vice-chairman of the Council.

The air force and navy were not represented on the NLC because they were small (each under 900 personnel in 1966) and none of their combined 150 or so officers had been a party to the *coup d'état*. The ruling army and police officers had little to fear, therefore, in the way of inter-service rivalries such as those that have periodically split the armed forces in Latin America where the joint strength of the smaller forces is often equal to that of the army. Excluding Commodores M.A. Otu and Hansen also avoided stressing status discrepancies between political and military rank. These would have been highlighted had the two service chiefs been invited to join the Council.

As may be seen in Tables 10.1 and 10.2, the NLC incorporated a simple majority of Ewes. Three of the eight Council members—two policemen, Harlley and Deku, and one soldier, Kotoka—were Anlo Ewes. The high proportion of Ewes on the Council was an outcome of the ethnic exclusiveness of the inner core of conspirators revealed earlier in this study. However, to anticipate one finding of the next chapter, this was to have repercussions on the army itself for it, in turn, led to an accentuated profile of Ewes in the middle and top ranks of the military establishment. This was to have an adverse impact on the army's internal solidarity and thus on the stability of the regime. Two members of the Ga people (Ankrah and Nunoo), an Ashanti (Afrifa), a Fanti (Ocran), and a Dagomba from Gushigu in the North (Yakubu), completed the composition of the army-police junta.

While the Ga community were represented equally between the police and the army, the ethnic/regional distribution between the two services of the remaining six Council members was uneven. Two of the four army officers were members of Ghana's predominant linguistic and cultural group, the Akan, and one was an Ewe. That there was not a northerner in the NLC's army group is hardly surprising given the fact that, firstly, only two men from the Gur-speaking peoples of the Northern and Upper Regions, Barwah and Zanlerigu, had been commissioned by Independence and, secondly, that only a handful of northerners had been commissioned since March 1957, none of whom held a rank above captain. There were no Akans in the police clique, but there was a Ga and a Dagomba. Two of the four policemen were Ewes, a predictable outcome when it is remembered that the coup was hatched by Ewes; but it was also a longer-term consequence of the fact that the police, like the army, attracted a disproportionately high number of Ewes (as well as a low ratio of Akans) in the 1940s and 1950s. The reasons for this were set out earlier, in Chapter 3.

It is striking that the NLC was numerically dominated by representatives of two minority groups: over 60 percent of the Council were Ewe or Ga, yet these two communities then accounted for less than a quarter of Ghana's population. Concomitantly, Akans made up one quarter of the Council. Proportional representation based on ethnicity would have meant four of the eight seats being filled by Akans. In view of the fact that the North embraced approximately one third of Ghana's inhabitants in the mid-1960s, the inclusion of Deputy Commissioner Yakubu was the least that could be done to assuage northern fears of discrimination in the tribal arithmetic of the NLC. It is interesting, though inconclusive, to note that the ethnic balance on the NLC was not significantly at variance with the ethnic/regional profile of the officer corps at Independence. What is important is that the coup popularly came to be viewed as a watershed in the ascendancy of the Ewe, although the prominence of that group was partially redressed by the appointment of a Ga as Council chairman and by Akan domination of the Political and Economic Committees (discussed below).

Religious denomination crosscut regional origins. Deku and Kotoka were the only Council members of the same ethnic group to share a religion—

TABLE 10.1
COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL, 24 FEBRUARY 1966

Name	Rank and Command	Age	Commission	Training	Ethnic origin
<u>Army</u>					
J.A. Ankrah	Maj-Gen. NLC Chairman	50	01.03.47	Eaton Hall	Ga
E.K. Kotoka	Lt.-Col. CO 2 Brigade	39	20.11.54	Eaton Hall	Ewe
A.K. Ocran	Lt.-Col. CO 1 Brigade	36	20.11.54	Eaton Hall	Fanti
A.A. Afrifa	Capt. 2 Brigade Major	29	22.07.60	Sandhurst	Ashanti
<u>Police</u>					
J.W.K. Harlley	Com. NLC Vice-Chairman	46	01.11.52	Hendon	Ewe
A.K. Deku ^a	Dep. Commissioner (CID)	43	04.04.53	Hendon	Ewe
B.A. Yakubu	Dep. Commissioner	40	01.11.55	Hendon	Dagomba
J.E.O. Nunoo	Assistant Commissioner	48	13.05.55	Hendon	Ga

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); The Ghana Police 1966 (Accra: Ghana Police HQ, 1966); and Daily Graphic (February-July 1966 issues).

^a Deku was not officially included in the NLC until 1 March 1966.

TABLE 10.2

ETHNIC/REGIONAL REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL OFFICERS BY SERVICE, 1 MARCH 1966

	Police	Army	Total	(%)
Ewe	2	1	3	(37.5)
Akan	0	2	2	(25.0)
Ga	1	1	2	(25.0)
North	1	0	1	(12.5)
Total	4	4	8	(100.0)

in their case Roman Catholicism. Ankrah was Methodist, Ocran Roman Catholic, Afrifa and Nunoo Anglican, Harlley Presbyterian and Yakubu Muslim. There is no evidence that church affiliations were important either in the congregation or cohesion of the rebels or in the composition and policies of the army-police junta—as some observers were inclined to believe was the case in the “Popish Plot” of Nigeria’s Major Nzeogwu.³⁸

While General Ankrah at fifty, was the most senior member of the Council and the oldest serving army officer, the military circle also included the youngest member: Afrifa was not to celebrate his thirtieth birthday until 24 April. The age disparity between the army and police conspirators was not quite so marked as it was on the NLC where the average age of policemen was forty-four. This compared to thirty-eight for the army contingent.³⁹ The average age of Council members was a little over forty-one. Nonetheless, the six year differential was accompanied by, and stressed, the gap between the two groups’ administrative experience and related matters of political acumen. The soldiers, who initially displayed a rather naive “anti-politics” outlook, can be unfavourably compared to their police colleagues whose long careers and politically sensitive work—especially at the Criminal Investigation Department and in Special Branch—equipped them with the knowledge, expertise and experience for wider political roles.

Every member of the NLC had received training in England and, with the sole exception of Afrifa (who was the only Sandhurst graduate and the only one not to have served in the ranks), had been commissioned before Independence. Length of commissioned service in the army ranged from just under nineteen years (Ankrah) to five years and seven months (Afrifa); and in the police from thirteen years and four months (Harlley) to ten years and four months (Yakubu). The longest serving soldier was Ankrah who had been recruited into the Gold Coast Regiment at the outbreak of World War II. Prior to that, he had worked for twelve months as a clerk in the civil service. Of the NLC policemen, Nunoo had the longest service record, having been recruited into the colonial constabulary aged twenty-two in June 1939.

Two of the four army officers had received secondary school education, Ankrah at the Wesleyan Methodist School, Accra, Afrifa at Adisadel. Only one of the policemen, Harley, went to secondary school. He graduated from Accra Academy.

A final word on the backgrounds of Yakubu and Nunoo completes this profile of the Council's policemen. Born in 1926, Bawa Andani Yakubu was sent to the Native Authority School at Yendi in 1937, completing his elementary education at the Tamale Government Senior School between 1941-1944. He enlisted as a police recruit in February 1945 and passed out six months later in August. Between May and October 1957, he attended the Subordinate Police Officers Training Course at Hendon.

John Edward Okoe Nunoo was born in Accra in May 1917, receiving his early education (from 1930 to 1936) at St John's English Church Mission School in Nsawam. He then worked for *J. Lyons and Company* as a clerk before enlisting in the police force in 1939. Sent to Hendon between March and August 1955, he was later seconded to the Tanganyika Police Force for a year in the early 1960s. Nunoo was promoted to assistant commissioner of police in 1964. Career details and promotion rates of Harley and his senior subordinates are displayed in Appendix B.

The New Junta and Its Allies

In a series of radio broadcasts in the days following the coup, Kotoka announced the inevitable suspension of the 1960 Constitution and declared that the new administration would "govern by decrees which shall have the force of law until a new constitution was promulgated."⁴⁰ Parliament, the CPP and all its auxiliary structures—for instance, the Young Pioneers, the Winneba Ideological Institute, the Young Farmers' League and the Market Womens' Union—were dissolved. Almost 900 persons held under the provision of the Preventive Detention Act were released, many of the vacated cells being filled by erstwhile ministers and ranking CPP functionaries. The aim of these actions, as well as other measures to reorganise the system of pre-coup local government, was to break CPP influence and patronage-based power and to erect a new military-bureaucratic government in its place.

To bolster its position and to discredit the CPP, the Council immediately authorised a profusion of judicial commissions of enquiry into the former regime. Twelve such commissions had been appointed by April, over forty by December 1967 and more than five dozen by the end of the NLC period. Some, including the Apaloo Commission to Enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties, were aimed directly at the ex-president. Others—for example, the Ollenu Commission of Enquiry into Irregularities and Malpractices in the Grant of Import Licences, and similar inquests into the State Fishing Corporation, the Timber Marketing Board and the local purchase of cocoa by the United Ghana Farmers' Council—were directed at exposing the extent of corruption and mismanagement in the administration

as a whole.⁴¹ The net result of these proceedings, which were widely reported in the media, was to orchestrate anti-CPP sentiment, the corollary of which was to vindicate the coup and endow the army-police junta with popular approval.

The junta also justified its rule by reference to a traditional political precept: Nkrumah had been "de-stooled" because he had forfeited the peoples' support. The process was, and remains, well-understood in Ghana where the stool (the skin in the North) is the principal emblem of high office. Traditionally, a chief who loses the confidence of his people, or who becomes arbitrary in his exercise of power, could be forcibly deposed. On 28 February, Ankrah claimed that Nkrumah had been overthrown "because no other means were available to restore to the people of Ghana the blessings of liberty, justice, happiness and prosperity."⁴² He went on to argue that Nkrumah had been de-stooled in accord with "the oldest and most treasured tradition of the people of Ghana."⁴³ It became the *leitmotif* of every important NLC speech and the theme of daily press and radio commentaries for several months afterwards.

To promote its own popularity, the army-police leadership engaged in a persistent campaign of propaganda against the individuals, institutions and policies of the former regime. It was aided in this respect by the fact that, initially at least, it was not itself tainted with the corruption and maladministration popularly associated with the CPP. The regime also tried to improve its standing by deploying army units for community projects. One such was "Operation Yellow Pod" which involved carting hundreds of bags of cocoa from remote rural areas. Another was "Exercise Abongo-Omo" (Abongo = soldier, Omo = washes whiter), in which Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Twum-Barimah's Third Battalion performed useful works such as ditching, clearing and track repairs.⁴⁴

The Council further tried to enhance its position by constant allusion to the "temporary" nature of its "holding operation" (for one sure basis of support for military governments is the promise to hand power back to civilians). This was backed up by the early announcement (on 27 February) and establishment (in September 1966) of a sixteen-member commission to draft a new constitution. Finally, NLC rule was made more acceptable by the junta's success in cultivating the support of traditional chiefs and in recruiting the talents of civilians in the modern sector. But which civilian groups were recruited by the officers and with what intentions?

As stressed by all students of military politics, it may be relatively straightforward for the army to seize office, but it is much more difficult for it to govern. It is only in large armies that officers obtain the kind of experience that prepares them for high administrative posts in government. Generally speaking, a small officer corps will be limited in its ability to develop and maintain a differentiated set of roles within the military establishment that are necessary for effective political control. As a result, the transferability of skill from a military to a political and economic sphere, or to large-scale organisational planning, is limited.⁴⁵

The military profession in such states also tends to exhibit rather rigid and stereotype political notions. The view that politicians are evil and corrupt and that politics is the fount of all the country's misfortunes is commonplace. The soldiers promise that the machinations and intrigue of self-seeking civilians will be replaced by the patriotic and chivalrous rule of an impartial military administration. Army officers stress order and orders. This is in contrast to politicians who are schooled in the more complex business of negotiation, bargaining and consensus.

But the quixotic emphasis on the distinctive values of martial norms inevitably flounders in the face of harsh political realities. And the problem of ruling is exacerbated by the restriction of relying on the established military chain of command and by the dilemmas of discipline imposed when orthodox channels of communication are by-passed by an increasingly politicised officer corps.

It is clear that the Ghanaian military in 1966 was singularly ill-equipped to govern. Not only was the officer corps small (on the eve of 24 February, there were only twenty-one men in the rank of lieutenant-colonel and above), but, as a result of the parallel programmes of rapid indigenisation and military expansion, virtually all command and staff posts were occupied by officers who were on the whole younger, less well-educated and less experienced than should have theoretically been the case. Only a small percentage of officers had completed training at the Staff College, Camberley (or equivalent courses elsewhere in the Commonwealth), and only a tiny handful had graduated from senior staff colleges (for example, Aferi at the Joint Services Staff College, Latimer) or had higher command or substantial administrative experience and skills (for instance, Barwah). In any case, it was these very individuals who were lost to the army as a consequence of the coup.

Shortages of appropriately trained and experienced personnel meant that—in contrast to Ghana's second military regime when large numbers of officers were seconded to civilian structures of authority⁴⁶—the possibility of direct military administration could not be entertained. In fact, the NLC entered office with rather hazy ideas about what it would do. As Afrifa later remarked:

We knew we would form some kind of revolutionary council. Originally we had planned to set up a small high-powered group of civilians. We were aware that as soldiers we were not cut out to do politics . . . we thought we could stand in briefly and put things right as quickly as possible.⁴⁷

That Ghana's coup-makers came to office with no detailed plans was occasioned by the fact that potential rebels are understandably preoccupied with the nerve-racking, dangerous and secret process of actually seizing power. There is sometimes also an element of spontaneity in the timing of coups, often the result of fears that the conspiratorial cell has been penetrated by security forces loyal to the regime. Thus, the rebels had no real programme, save the general one of eradicating the CPP and restoring

their own security and the corporate interests of the regular armed forces. In this, the army-police junta was heavily reliant on the intelligentsia in the civilian bureaucracies and the opposition politicians who had been excluded from office by the more militant "young men" of the CPP.

In his study of the civil service and local government under Nkrumah, Amonoo convincingly argues that the adaptation of the inherited machinery of central administration to the purposes and orientation of the CPP resulted in the development of dual institutional structures.⁴⁸ During the republican period in particular, the process was accelerated so that many of the newer special departments and secretariats in the presidential sector ran parallel to, and duplicated functions of, the established offices and departments of the ministerial sector. The ministerial sphere was increasingly excluded from many areas of responsibility, with the result that the advice of the routine-oriented civil servants was frequently by-passed in favour of that from the senior administrative officials in the presidential sector who were closely associated with the designs and direction of the regime.

While Amonoo's central argument suffers from a number of defects—notably his failure to examine critically the ideology of the regime (a caveat freely admitted by the author, but surely a subject requiring fuller attention when so much emphasis is attached to "the orientations and purposes of the CPP") and because he fails to recognise the instrumentalism inherent in the "loyalty" of officials in the presidential sector: as with the public at large, the civil servants were equally susceptible to Coleman's "bandwagon psychology" of wanting to be on the winning side—the picture portrayed of a growing schism in the inherited machinery of administration is both original and authentic.

After the coup, the unorthodox and complex structure of administration was transformed and, for a few months at least, Ghana was virtually administered by civil servants whose role was greatly expanded under the NLC. The labyrinth of offices, secretariats and boards was drastically reduced and the number of ministries cut from thirty-two to eighteen. The ministries were headed by principal secretaries. Civil servants also dominated the Economic, Administrative and Foreign Affairs Committees established by the Council. The nine regions were run by Regional Committees of Administration which were headed by a combination of one army officer, a policeman and a civilian regional administrative officer. It was with some justification, then, that one senior civil servant was able to claim that "when the armed forces and police succeeded in restoring freedom to this country, the NLC demonstrated their appreciation of the proper role which top civil servants should play in a democratic country."⁴⁹

June 1966 saw the allocation of ministerial responsibility to members of the NLC,⁵⁰ but following the unsuccessful counter-coup of April 1967 (see Chapter 11) civilian commissioners were brought in to head most of the ministries and secretariats. In this way, the Council was better able to concentrate on the condition of its primary constituents, the soldiers and policemen in the barracks. The civilian commissioners, together with the

twenty-three individuals who were appointed to the Political Committee, were virtually all members of the professional intelligentsia who had gone into opposition under Nkrumah's rule. Many of them had been former members of the UGCC and of the old Ashanti-based NLM which had merged with other opposition groups to form the United Party.

The Political Committee itself was intrinsically a conglomeration of those who had been beaten at the polls in the elections of the 1950s or who had moved into opposition (and in some cases into exile or gaol) since Independence. It included such men as Edward Akufo-Addo (chairman until 13 December 1966, when he resigned to become the Chief Justice), a former Supreme Court judge and the man who later became president during the Second Republic; Kofi Busia (who succeeded Akufo-Addo as chairman), former opposition leader-in-exile and prime minister in the Second Republic; M.K. Apaloo and R.R. Amponsah, who, it will be remembered, had both been detained in 1958 following the Awhaitey affair and who were released on the day of the coup; the ubiquitous Joe Appiah, the Kumasi barrister whose protean politics have ensured survival—if not a prominent government position—throughout the vicissitudes of Ghana's independent history; S.D. Dombo of the defunct Northern People's Party which had gone into opposition to the CPP in the North; and many others with similar credentials including E.V.C. de Graft Johnson, K.G. Konuah and Abayifa Karboe. The partisan weighting of the Political Committee reflected the avowedly political nature of the NLC. Of the committee's original twenty-three members, sixteen had been overtly associated with opposition to the CPP. A similar pre-coup opposition flavour was detectable in the junta's other creations such as the Electoral Commission, the Centre for Civic Education and the Constitutional Commission.

The coup was thus important because it marked the first real upheaval in the domestic distribution of power since the granting of internal self-government. In effect, the rebellion of 1966 resulted in a reversal to a political arrangement not wholly dissimilar to the colonial framework of authority that existed prior to 1951. And in gaining considerable support from traditional rulers, the junta again mirrored the relationship between chieftaincy and the British administration under indirect rule.

The atavistic impact of the rebellion was further revealed in the emergence of a colonial-type administrative pattern which dispensed with the normal separation of legislative and executive powers in favour of a combination of the two. This hybridism manifested itself at the national level, where the junta ruled collectively by decree;⁵¹ at the regional stratum, where the army-police-civil service troikas administered; and at the city, municipal, urban and local councils, where management committees, monopolised by civil servants, replaced the dismissed functionaries of the CPP. In short, the basic structure of NLC rule was a military-police bureaucratic one supported by advisory bodies. The system jettisoned the mass mobilisation politics of the CPP in favour of government through consultation with trusted selected groups.

So it was that those individuals previously described as the professional intelligentsia—composed of the more prestigious lawyers, senior civil servants, academics, doctors and rising group of entrepreneurs and managers (or Lloyd's business and professional elite, defined as those persons who are "Western-educated and wealthy to a high degree relative to the mass of the population")⁵²—who had expected to inherit political power after the dismantlement of British colonial authority, but who were defeated at the polls by the counter-elite of urban elementary school leavers (the "commoners," "young men" and "Winneba Socialist Boys") were pulled to power by the coup leaders. The NLC leadership identified with the institutional interests and political aspirations of those social groups least associated with Nkrumah's CPP. The military-police junta's partners in dyarchy were those men and women who were appointed to prominent positions in the above-mentioned committees and commissions of enquiry, to overseas diplomatic missions, to the state corporations and agencies and to the editorial boards of the government-controlled media.

It was from these entrenched positions of power that the "outs" of the former regime were able to act as a catalyst and control on the process of demilitarisation, for the NLC's civilian advisers were as much concerned to prevent the return of the CPP as was the Council itself. Simultaneously, although not always in harmony, the NLC was successful in its political objective of destroying the CPP and in helping into power groups hostile to Nkrumah, thereby endorsing Finer's observation that "the military leadership always tries to control the political product of any successor regime they establish."⁵³

Of particular importance was the elevated political platform provided for Kofi Busia's Progress Party (PP). It was the most comprehensive reason for that party's success. The unparalleled prominence given to Busia and his lieutenants throughout the NLC period meant that they benefited from a bandwagon effect from the many who believed that the PP was supposed to win. The NLC's clients also gained from the fact that their main opposition came from Komla Gbedemah's National Alliance of Liberals. By highlighting Gbedemah's CPP links, and by playing on the susceptibilities of an electorate that harboured suspicions of Ewe hegemonic ambitions, the PP ensured that its initial advantages in the electoral stakes were transmuted into overwhelming victory at the polls in 1969.⁵⁴ The coup of February 1966, and the election of 1969, had thereby reversed the earlier election results of the 1950s.

Notes

1. J. Kraus, "Arms and Politics in Ghana," in C.E. Welch (ed.), *Soldier and State in Africa* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), Chapter 4; R. Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference-Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case," *World Politics* 23, 3 (April 1971), pp.399-430; R. Pinkney, *Ghana Under Military Rule 1966-1969* (London: Methuen, 1972); R.E. Dowse, "Military and Police Rule," in D. Austin and R. Luckham (eds.), *Politicians and*

Soldiers in Ghana 1966-1972 (London: Frank Cass, 1975), Chapter 1; and A.K. Ocran, *Politics of the Sword* (London: Rex Collings, 1977). The theses—by Bardill, Hutchful, Nkrumah, Saffu and Winstanley—are fully documented in Section F of the Bibliography.

2. The structural similarities between the armed forces and the bureaucracy in developing states are discussed in a section on the army as rulers in R.E. Dowse, "The Military and Political Development," in C. Leys (ed.), *Politics and Change in Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), especially pp.227-232.

3. Interview, Lt.-Colonel J. Enninful, 13 August 1975. During the rest of February and March 1966, articles in the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* reported numerous stories of army and police units throughout the country being presented with gifts including sheep, fish, cassava, plantain and fruit.

4. The main publications are D. Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (New York: Atheneum, 1963); D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); and H. Bretton, *The Rise and Fall of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Methuen, 1976). For the CPP and external relations, see W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969).

5. Ocran, *Politics of the Sword*, p.71.

6. Under the NLC, Omaboe became Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Amegashie (an Ewe) Commissioner for Industries. Both were also appointed members of the National Advisory Committee. There is no evidence that either had foreknowledge of the coup.

7. "Broadcast on 28 February 1966," in *Ghana Reborn* (New York: Ghana Information Services, June 1966), pp.7-8.

8. For figures, see *Economic Survey 1967* (Accra: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1968) p.24.

9. The most comprehensive account of CPP corruption during this period is by R. Rajkumar, *Political Corruption in Ghana: 1951-1966*, Exeter University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1974.

10. Nkrumah's involvement in ju-ju activities was noted in Chapter 7, note 27.

11. Details in Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp.412-414.

12. For evidence of this, see A. Roberts, "Civil Resistance to Military Coups," *Journal of Peace Research* 12, 1 (1975), pp.19-36.

13. A full list of congratulatory messages is provided in *Rebirth of Ghana* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1966), pp.46-54. See also contemporary press advertisements (from the Black Star Line staff, the Lebanon Society, the Glamour Group of Companies, Tarzan Travel Agency, The Koforidua Motel, etc.) which praise the NLC for delivering Ghana from "economic strangulation," "the beast Nkrumah" and all manner of other horrors.

14. *A Man of the People* (London: Heinemann, 1966), p.162.

15. M. Owusu, *Uses and Abuses of Political Power* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970).

16. J.S. Coleman, "The Emergence of African Political Parties," in C.G. Haines (ed.), *Africa Today* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), Chapter 7.

17. *Ibid.*, p.238.

18. T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p.257.

19. B. Fitch and M. Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of an Illusion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966).

20. *Ibid.*, p.ix.

21. K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p.49.

22. G. Bing, *Reap the Whirlwind* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), pp.426-436.

23. R. First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat* (Harmondsworth: Penguin African Library, 1970), p.376.

24. "Militarism in Africa," *New Left Review* (July-August 1966), *passim*.

25. The arrival of Soviet security agents was revealed to this author in interviews with two NRC members, Major-General N.A. Aferi (15 February 1974) and Colonel R.E.A. Kotei (9 April 1974).

26. *West Africa*, 22 May 1978.

27. *The Times*, 5 June 1978.

28. Because of an undertaking given by the author, the sources for this assessment cannot be disclosed and verified here.

29. *Economic Survey* (Accra: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1966); and A. Adomakoh, "Ghana's Foreign Debts," *Legon Observer*, 15 September 1967.

30. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p.257.

31. Akan saying meaning "The canoe must be paddled on both sides," that is "Unity is Strength."

32. This, and other soldiers' songs, appear in A. Clayton, *Communication for New Loyalties: African Soldiers' Songs* (Ohio: Center for International Studies, 1978), p.12.

33. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, p.51; and T. Jones, *Ghana's First Republic 1960-1966* (London: Methuen, 1976), p.294.

34. M. Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964), p.39.

35. Interview, 20 May 1974. The question of police parity on the NRC did not come up in 1972. The service was not involved in the coup. According to Cobbina, "At times I've felt very much on my own. I'd like to have two or three policemen on the NRC to back our case because often I can't get my views across—I need some backing."

36. Ocran, *Politics of the Sword*, p.76.

37. *West Africa*, 17 December 1966.

38. See the discussion on the possible ideological and religious motivations of Nigeria's January plotters in N. Miners, *The Nigerian Army 1956-1966* (London: Methuen, 1971), pp.175-179.

39. One reason for the age gap is that the army officers, as we have noted, were not, on the whole, drawn from the very top of the military hierarchy. The NLC policemen, on the other hand, were the four highest ranking police officers in the country. Another reason reflected differences in army and police rates of Africanisation. Although localisation of the police occurred earlier than in the army, the pace of promotions was slower. This meant that roughly equivalent rankings in the two services were not accompanied by similarities in age and experience.

40. *Daily Graphic*, 26 February 1966.

41. The reports of these enquiries were published by Ghana's Ministry of Information, Accra, between 1966-1970.

42. *Daily Graphic*, 2 March 1966.

43. *Ibid*.

44. *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 5 (June 1969), pp.18-20.

45. Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations*, pp.42-43.

46. In mid-1975, thirty-six middle-ranking and senior officers from the three services were attached to non-military organisations. See *List of Military Officers Seconded to Civilian Organisations, May 1975* (Accra: Defence Adviser's Office, British High Commission, 1975). A copy is held by this author.

47. *Legon Observer*, 17 February 1967.

48. B. Amonoo, *Politics of Institutional Dualism: Ghana 1957-1966*, Exeter University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1973.

49. Letter from H. Osie, *Legon Observer*, 31 March 1967.

50. The portfolios are listed in *West Africa*, 25 June 1966.

51. Following the allocation of ministerial portfolios to Council members in June, General Ankrah insisted that "decisions are taken by the NLC as a whole, but it is a useful aid to efficiency to delegate some powers to individual members of the Council." *West Africa*, 30 July 1966.

52. P.C. Lloyd, *Classes, Crises and Coups* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971), p.4.

53. S.E. Finer, "Military Disengagement from Politics," in the collected papers on *The Politics of Demilitarisation* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1966), p.3.

54. Of the 140 National Assembly seats, the PP won 105, taking just under 60 percent of the votes. Gbedemah's NAL gained 29 seats and the other parties and independents shared the remaining 6 seats. Detailed results are provided in the *Legon Observer*, 5 September 1969. For an analysis of the election issues and results, see D. Austin, "Caesar's Laurel Crown," *West Africa*, 13 September 1969; and Y. Twumasi, "The 1969 Election," in Austin and Luckham, *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana* (London: Frank Cass, 1975), pp.140-163.

11

The Junta and Its Primary Constituents: Political Patronage and the Counter-Coup

In the preceding section, it was shown how the February coup resulted in a shift of power, from the CPP politicians who had inherited the political kingdom from the British, to the army and police forces and their allies in the civil service, business and the professions. One of the arguments posited explained the popularity of the putsch in terms of an incumbent regime's "marketability." Political participation was seen, primarily, as an expression of perceived economic interest.

The question now is to examine how the Council used its power, not in its wider governmental rule or policy orientations (which fall outside the precincts of this study), but where it concerned the military establishment itself. More precisely, this chapter will demonstrate how the NLC, in common with military regimes elsewhere, used its unique position in its capacity as the new patron-distributor of state handouts to reward the security services in general and the leaders of the coup in particular. These phenomena are important because they had immediate and abiding repercussions on the army's organisational cohesion.

The assumption of office by the armed forces and their top civilian advisers did not eliminate the politics of public resource allocation for private, sectional or corporate ends. Indeed, the parcelling out of state funds for such purposes was ratified by, and was clearly visible under, NLC rule. In other words, the military leadership behaved very much like the civilian politicians they had replaced, thereby directly contributing to, rather than altering, the prevailing economic, material and status basis of Ghanaian politics.

For the military and police services as a whole, there were pay increases, new kit and the reintroduction of certain subventions that had been suspended or cut in the First Republic. In their roles as Ghana's decision-makers (particularly as the ministries of finance, defence and the interior were controlled directly by NLC men throughout the 1966-1969 period), the Council's eight members were able to ensure that the institutional

grievances of the armed forces and police were quickly rectified. These and other actions confirm the wide observation in the literature on civil-military relations that an army invariably rewards, looks after and protects itself after seizing control.

At the same time, and as noted in Chapter 10, appointments within the administration provided the junta's civilian partners with conduits for advancing their own material, career and political interests. The Council further ensured the cooperation of its coalition allies by introducing substantial salary increases for civil servants and university lecturers, by dismantling the alternative bureaucratic structures previously located in the presidential office and by the dispensation of loans, jobs, contracts and licences to favoured friends.

Finally, but much more significant for the military's internal solidarity (and thus for the purposes of this study), came the allocation of the spoils of office to the individuals who organised, led and supported the rebellion. In this respect, the ruling caucus on the NLC were especially well-placed since they calibrated the distribution of state patronage and controlled all appointments and promotions in the forces.

To reward the middle-ranking officers who had, in one way or another, assisted in the change of regime, and to ensure their continued loyalty to the new order, the Council embarked on a new round of promotions. This involved almost all of the three dozen or so pre-coup majors and half colonels. The army members of the NLC also promoted themselves, not once but several times. But the expeditious and unprecedented manner in which the uniformed politicians exercised their prerogative to satisfy the material demands and status aspirations of these officers—especially where it concerned the Council members themselves—was responsible for the spread of dissatisfaction and indiscipline in the military establishment. As will be seen, these tendencies manifested themselves at lower rungs of the hierarchy, mainly on the part of deeply frustrated and ambitious young officers.

In this penultimate chapter, then, it will be argued that it was the junta's own measures regarding the internal organisation of the army that violated the authoritativeness of the command structure. By grossly over-promoting themselves, the senior officers were themselves directly responsible for career blockages and for the growing mood of relative deprivation at junior levels. The inability of the military command to maintain regular organisational patterns on the British model eventually resulted in an outburst of violence from below. This aimed at the assassination of all senior officers and the forcible overthrow of the NLC.

In the event, the April 1967 counter-coup, led by Lieutenants Arthur and Yeboah of the Reconnaissance Regiment, was responsible for the death of only one Council member but the regime was very nearly destroyed. It acted, too, as a catalyst on the process of recivilianisation. What is more, the evidence suggests that the insurrection was not only an assault on a distorted system of authority and its ranking officers, but also it was directed against a particular ethnic group, the Ewe.

"Themsay": Military and Police Benefits¹

Lefever's assertion that "Under the NLC the police, like the military, were given no special benefits or favours"² is wholly misleading. Indeed, the evidence collected here reveals that precisely the opposite was true. The material perquisites and privileges awarded or restored to the forces included a cash bonus to all officers and men; the actual sum was calculated on a sliding scale according to rank—in much the same way, one might suggest, as officers and ship's company of the Royal Navy were remunerated following successful actions in Tudor, Stuart and Hanoverian times.

In March 1966, Kotoka ordered a review of the Armed Forces Terms and Conditions of Service as well as an immediate pay increase to all ranks. Soon after the anti-NLC coup of April 1967, the Council felt it necessary to introduce a pay rise again. At that time, in July 1967, NLC Decree 187 increased military pensions and made them retrospective to February 1966.

But this was not all. Kotoka was also responsible for setting up a committee to examine the problems of army accommodation, an initiative which bore fruit in the construction of improved barracks and quarters during 1967–1970. In addition, the CPP's termination of out-of-station allowances was reversed and rent for officers' housing, which had been increased by 25 percent in 1961, was abolished altogether. Other benefits included the restoration of uniform and maintenance payments and an increase in training, vehicle maintenance and mileage allowances, all of which had been eroded or phased out in the early 1960s.

A new transfer grant was brought in, as was the introduction of uncharged return passages for spouses and children of officers selected for overseas courses. Free electricity and water for officers was reintroduced. This was greatly appreciated by the wives, many of whom supplemented family income by using these services in their bakery and other businesses. Some tax concessions were also introduced.³

Other measures that went down well with the military included the reabsorption of the POGR units (minus its commander, Zanlerigu) into the army soon after the coup, an exchange training arrangement with Britain announced in early 1968 and the appointment of a regular officer to head Military Intelligence (Nkrumah's personal nominee, Hassan, was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel J.R.K. Acquah).

Improvements in pay and conditions, and the purchase of new equipment, were financed by a substantial increase in current and capital expenditure on the armed forces and police. In a familiar, if somewhat circuitous, argument, Commissioner of Finance Afrifa claimed that "owing to the neglect suffered by our armed forces in the past, it has become imperative to re-equip the entire army to make it justify its existence."⁴ As indicated in Table 11.1, there was an absolute increase in military and police expenditure on the current account for every year between 1965 and 1969, from NC20.7 million to NC49.4 million (an increase of 138.6 percent) in the case of the armed forces, and from NC11.6 million to NC20.7 million (a 78.5 percent increase) for the police.

TABLE 11.1
EXPENDITURE ON DEFENCE AND POLICE, 1965-1969^a

Year	Current (NC m)				Capital (NC m)			
	Defence		Police		Defence		Police	
1965	20.7	(9.4)	11.6	(5.3)	4.7	(3.3)	0.7	(0.5)
1966	22.4	(11.0)	13.0	(6.4)	3.1	(4.8)	0.4	(0.6)
1967	32.5	(13.1)	15.8	(6.4)	4.7	(6.9)	0.9	(1.3)
1968	41.2	(13.7)	17.1	(5.7)	4.9	(7.3)	1.5	(2.2)
1969	49.4	(15.7)	20.7	(6.6)	4.5	(8.0)	0.8	(1.4)

Source: Computed from Economic Survey, 1969 (Accra: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1970), pp.29-30.

^a The figures in brackets are percentages of total government (capital or current) expenditure.

Looked at as a proportion of overall government current expenditure, the defence allocation went up from 9.4 percent to 15.7 percent and for the police from 5.3 percent to 6.6 percent. The share of current expenditure for the military increased every year; that for the police remained the same in 1966/67, it dropped in 1968 but increased above the 1966 and 1967 levels in 1969. In that year, spending on the security forces accounted for more than a fifth of the government's current budget.

On the capital account, defence expenditure in absolute terms did not fluctuate much, although it is interesting to note that the NC4.5 million figure for 1969 represented a massive increase in the proportion of government capital expenditure allocated for defence purposes since 1965. Similarly, the proportion of governmental capital spending on the police jumped significantly, from 0.5 percent in 1965 to 1.4 percent in 1969.

Total expenditure on the armed forces between 1965 and 1969 rose from NC25.4 million to NC53.9 million—an increase of 112.2 percent. Police expenditure as an amalgam of both accounts increased by 74.8 percent, from NC12.3 million to NC21.5 million. Not surprisingly, the most spectacular surge in military spending occurred between 1966 and 1967 when it was increased by 45.9 percent, from NC25.5 million to NC37.2 million. The greater proportion of these increases went into salaries and wages. New uniforms, boots, vehicles, fuel, small-arms, ammunition and wirelasses accounted for most of the rest. But however apportioned, the inflated defence budget epitomised, and was largely responsible for, a significant redistribution of public resources in favour of Ghana's armed bureaucrats.

In the police force, a number of other innovations and improvements were made. These included increases in police pay, the introduction of a special loans scheme to enable officers to buy their own homes, life insurance policies for all police personnel and the establishment of a police welfare fund for individuals exhibiting special skills and acts of bravery.⁵ Addressing

a passing-out parade in Accra, Harlley explained that "these measures will lead to the police service obtaining certain necessary items for their comfort . . . these are some of the encouragements we are trying to give to you to ensure maximum efficiency."⁶

As the supreme legislator, the Council also reversed many of the measures that had been taken against the police following the Flagstaff House attack on the president in 1964. Some of the officers who had been dismissed by Nkrumah were either reinstated or given prominent posts in government service. The problem posed by the presence of former Commissioner of Police Erasmus Madjitey—who, like Ankrah, had been sacked—was solved by posting him to Pakistan as high commissioner. Many of those in the National Security Service, particularly former Special Branch men who had been drafted into the Presidential Detail Department, were reabsorbed into the regular police. In May 1966, Special Branch, by then under an Ewe, C.K. Mawuenyegah, the border guard and customs were all reintegrated into the police service. However, some of their most senior officers (political appointees closely associated with the former regime), including a deputy commissioner of police, an assistant commissioner of police and the top two men from Special branch, were purged.⁷ Thus, as in the army, an attempt was made, in the interests of institutional solidarity, to reverse Nkrumah's policy of fragmenting the police force for his own security ends.

The number of posts at the apex of the police hierarchy was also expanded. On 26 March 1966, Harlley was promoted to the hitherto unknown rank in Ghana of inspector-general of police; and Deku, who retained his post at the head of CID, and Nunoo, who took charge of training and welfare, were promoted commissioners on 9 and 28 April respectively. Yakubu was promoted deputy commissioner in May. Several other senior policemen were given accelerated promotion. For instance, J.G. Smith was promoted deputy commissioner in May and appointed chairman of Greater-Accra's Regional Committee of Administration. Superintendents S.Q. Archampong and J.M. Kporie were made assistant commissioners. The former subsequently became vice-chairman of the Ashanti Regional Committee in 1968; the latter chaired the Northern Regional Committee between 1966 and 1968. In Appendix C (Strength and rank structure of the Ghana Police, March 1966), the number of positions at assistant commissioner and above is tabulated. The figure is twenty-six. Before the coup it had been nineteen.

Rewarding the Coup-Makers

Treading the path of that well-known and established tradition of shuffling off questionable officers to foreign parts, Nkrumah's CDS, Aferi, was sent to Mexico City as ambassador—an appointment he accepted with some reluctance.⁸ Although he cabled his approval of the coup from the OAU conference in Addis Ababa, his support for the action was strongly suspect, largely because he had been picked as successor to General S.J.A. Otu. Otu himself was packed off to India as Ghana's high commissioner.

Ankrah, who had been prematurely retired in 1965, was promoted lieutenant-general on 24 February and appointed General Officer Commanding the Ghana Armed Forces. A month later, his title was altered to Commander-in-Chief. Kotoka, the indispensable military drive-wheel of the rebellion, inherited the position vacated by the dead Brigadier Barwah. A lieutenant-colonel prior to the putsch, Kotoka was immediately promoted through two ranks to become major-general. When Ankrah assumed the office of C-in-C in March 1966, Kotoka was appointed GOC Ghana Armed Forces and CDS. A few months later, on 24 July, he became a lieutenant-general.

Within the same period, Ocran had risen from lieutenant-colonel and commander of the First Infantry Brigade to brigadier and commandant of the Military Academy. On the first anniversary of the coup, he was promoted to major-general. By 1970, as a member of the NLC-created Presidential Commission, he too had reached the rank of lieutenant-general. During the junta's tenure of office, Afrifa's career was also punctuated by regular and rapid promotions: from acting major to full colonel on the day of the coup, brigadier in April 1967, major-general in April 1969 and to lieutenant-general at the age of thirty-four early in 1970.

The rewards of office embraced all individuals who had formed the several tiers of the conspiratorial cell described in Chapter 8. As Table 11.2 shows, every one of the sixteen army rebels was promoted within fourteen months of the revolt. Several by-passed one rank (from captain to lieutenant-colonel in Dontoh's case) or several ranks (from half colonel to lieutenant-general and major-general, respectively for Kotoka and Ocran, and from captain to brigadier in Afrifa's case) altogether during the same period.

None of the NLC army collaborators failed to obtain three promotions in this time and Afrifa actually had four. Five of the officers (Kotoka, Ocran, Afrifa, Dontoh and Coker-Appiah) were promoted on 24 February, whilst seven (Amenu, Kattah, Tevie, Ashitey, Okai, Asare and Achaab) were promoted within a month, on 21 March. The remainder (Addy, Dedjoe, Kwashie and Avevor) were promoted in March or April the following year.

Generally speaking, the date(s) and rate of promotions were a factor of an individual's contribution to the coup. Hence, for instance, the rapid elevation of Afrifa, Dontoh and Coker-Appiah. The NLC were expeditious in recognising and rewarding the part played by the charismatic Afrifa in the march on Accra. They were equally cognisant of the daring deeds performed by Captain Dontoh (who led the armoured assault on Flagstaff House) and Victor Coker-Appiah, the Field Engineer commander. This six foot two Fanti was responsible for most of the pyrotechnics during "Operation Cold Chop." Coker-Appiah spent the coup hours arresting CPP stalwarts after dynamiting them out of their homes. In the early hours before dawn, he had to be physically restrained from blowing up more buildings than he did.⁹

Battalion commanders and senior MOD officers like Kattah, Amenu, Okai and Asare—who had been privy to the early plotting or brought into

TABLE 11.2

PROMOTION RATES OF 1966 ARMY CONSPIRATORS, 16 APRIL 1967

Name	Age	Comm- ission	Number of months from rank to rank and, in brackets, total time to attain each rank ^a								Officer service ^b (months)
			Lt	Capt	Major	Lt.-Col	Col	Brig	Maj.-Gen	Lt.-Gen	
E.K. Kotoka	40	20.11.54	18	36 (54)	60 (114)	2* (116)	xx	xx	53 (169)	5 (174)	149
A.K. Ocran	37	20.11.54	18	36 (54)	60 (114)	25* (139)	xx	26 (165)	12 (177)		149
A.A. Afrifa	30	22.07.60	1	36* (37)	xx	xx	30 (67)	13 (80)			81
D.C.K. Amenu	38	11.02.56	18	36 (54)	51 (105)	27* (132)	27 (159)	13 (172)			134
A.K. Kattah	34	11.02.56	18	36 (54)	39 (93)	27* (120)	27 (147)				134
C.K.T. Tevie	38	25.08.56	18	36 (54)	56 (110)	27* (137)	27 (164)				128
J.T. Addy	40	04.06.55	18	36 (54)	48 (102)	27* (129)	39 (168)				142
I.A. Ashitey	37	11.02.56	18	36 (54)	35* (89)	55 (144)					134
E.N.N. Dedjoe	49	22.07.58	xx	5 (5)	72* (77)	28 (105)					105
R.J. Dontoh	37	21.03.58	xx	36* (36)	xx	66 (102)					109
V. Coker-Appiah	33	01.08.58	xx	36 (36)	48* (84)	6 (90)					105
L.A. Okai	32	16.12.55	18	36 (54)	60* (114)	9 (123)					136
D.A. Asare	33	19.09.57	3	36 (39)	56* (95)	7 (102)					115
F.K. Kwashie	44	01.05.59	xx	48* (48)	60 (108)						96
A. Avevor	43	01.11.62	xx	48* (48)	26 (74)						54
R.A. Achaab	30	22.07.60	xx	57* (57)	11 (68)						81

Sources: As for Table 9.2.

^a These figures are based on the seniority dates utilised by the army for promotions and are not from actual dates of commission (as in b below).

^b These are the actual numbers of months served from dates of commission.

xx The rank is effectively by-passed as the seniority date coincides with the next rank up.

* Indicates the substantive rank held on the eve of 24 February.

the plan by Ocran on the eve of the coup, but who had not played a prominent part in its execution—were rewarded with a single promotion within a month. Major Dedjoe and Captains Avevor and Kwashie were also promoted, not, however, until 1967 since they were elderly officers (by Ghanaian standards) in the General/QM Branch who had not been key coup figures and who were in any case fortunate to have obtained a commission at all. They were discreetly requited with a single promotion which would never have come to them had normal criteria obtained.

That the army conspirators benefited greatly from the success of their operation can be emphasised further by allusion to two sections of Table 11.2 (the penultimate figure for each officer, and the final column showing actual length of commissioned service) which indicate promotion rates after the coup. The Council members have been dealt with already: further comment on their phenomenal advance up the promotional ladder would be superfluous.

As Table 11.2 shows, the next four most senior officers listed took only twenty-seven months to move from lieutenant-colonel to colonel (in the case of three) and thirty-nine months (in Addy's case). Amenu was then promoted again, to brigadier, thirteen months later. What is also significant is that none of them had spent even three years as a major. In fact, all four had spent only twenty-seven months in that rank and none of them had seen more than eleven years commissioned service when Nkrumah was deposed.

When gauged against normal military criteria, upward mobility for the six collaborators who were half colonels by April 1967 was no less startling. The four battalion/regiment commanders were promoted from major (captain in Dontoh's case) to lieutenant-colonel within four weeks of the coup. Thirty-one year old Okai, who had served as a major for just nine months, had been in the army for marginally over ten years. Asare, who was only a year older, had been a major for only seven months and an officer for little more than eight years. Coker-Appiah, also only thirty-two, was promoted lieutenant-colonel on the day of the coup. He had served as a captain for four years and as major for only six months, yet he had graduated from Sandhurst as recently as 1958. All his British RMAS contemporaries were junior captains when he became a lieutenant-colonel. The Recce Regiment commander, Dontoh, was a captain with less than eight years officer service on 23 February. The following day, he, too, was promoted lieutenant-colonel, by-passing major altogether. Majors Ashitey and Dedjoe, who were serving under Kotoka at the Kumasi garrison before the insurrection, were also prematurely promoted to lieutenant-colonel, the former in March 1966, Dedjoe in April 1967.

Finally, Captains Kwashie, Achaab and Avevor, the only officers so far unaccounted for, were promoted major: Kwashie in April 1967, Achaab in March 1966 and Avevor in March 1967. Although a major, Avevor had been an officer for less than five years.

By April 1967, every one of the sixteen army coup-makers had been promoted and the average period of time spent in the preceding rank of

actual service (as opposed to a rank or ranks which had been by-passed) was a mere twenty-one months. Even this low figure is somewhat misleading since it fails to make allowance for the fantastic promotion rates of the three NLC members who gave themselves a total of eleven promotions in under fourteen months. Twelve of the sixteen conspirators were promoted within four weeks of the putsch, by which time the average length of officer service for the whole group was seven years and ten months. Divided by rank gradings, the figures are: lieutenant-general (11 years, 4 months), major-general (also 11 years, 4 months), brigadier (7 years, 10 months), colonel (10 years, 2 months), lieutenant-colonel (8 years, 8 months) and major (5 years, 4 months). The absence of obvious length of commissioned service differentials between the rank groupings is noteworthy. Indeed, there is actually an inverse differential in the brigadier and colonel figures. Similar observations may be made with regard to an absence of sizeable age margins between the rank echelons' occupants, the significance of which—together with a number of related factors bearing on the military's internal condition—are developed later in this chapter.

Promotions and Patronage

The active participants in the putsch were not the only officers who drew advantages from the regime they brought to power. Chapter 9 on the army-police revolt sought to demonstrate that the majority of middle-ranking and senior officers serving in Ghana participated, or provided tacit collaboration, in the coup. What then was the overall result of the insurrection on the promotional prospects of those officers who were majors and above on the eve of Nkrumah's downfall? With the obvious exceptions of the major-general and brigadier levels (whose pre-putsch incumbents were principal targets of the rebels), officers in each of these rank groupings obtained special gains from the change of regime. These were clearly distinguishable from the benefits accruing to the military establishment as a whole.

The officers involved profited either because of their active or passive connivance in the events of 24 February or because—despite the partial basis of the coupistes' promotions—the Council could not entirely flout the principle of a rank structure based on equity, seniority and merit. It was also essential, both for reasons of security and political support, that the junta could feel confident about the loyalty of those in the rank of major and above. For one thing, many of them were commanders (or deputy commanders) of the strategically important teeth arms. Some effort, therefore, was made to maintain a semblance of hierarchical normality, at least where it concerned those individuals who were above the rank of captain. The fact that the air force and navy commanders, M.A. Otu and D.A. Hansen, retained their posts and were promoted on 21 March (to air vice-marshal and rear-admiral, respectively), and that Bruce was given command of the army and Crabbe appointed to command the First Brigade (in the ranks

of major-general and brigadier, respectively), also adds weight to the argument that the NLC felt some need to maintain the organisational profile of the *status quo ante*.

Thus, of the seventeen majors who held regular commissions under Nkrumah (fourteen of whom were combat status), thirteen were promoted lieutenant-colonel before the end of 1966—seven in the main round of promotions in March. Two others, Dedjoe and Hammond (General/QM Branch) were promoted in April 1967.¹⁰ Of the fifteen who were promoted, twelve had been commissioned after Independence, nine of them at least a year afterwards and some (Assasie, for example) as late as 1959. At the time of their promotions from major, only one (Asafu-Adjaye) had been commissioned for more than eleven years. The rest, with the exceptions of Ashitey and Okai (ten years, and ten years three months, respectively), had been officers for under nine years. One third (Coker-Appiah, Assasie, Tachie-Menson, Acquaye-Nortey and M.O. Koranteng) had actually been commissioned for less than eight years. On average, the fifteen officers promoted to lieutenant-colonel had done 102 months commissioned service. In the British Army, on which the Ghana Army is modelled, twenty years was the normal time spent as an officer before elevation to half colonel.¹¹ Even British officers of considerable ability and initiative could not hope for this before seventeen or eighteen years, double that of the Ghanaian cohort under review here.

The blatantly instrumental nature of these promotions is highlighted by an examination of time spent in service as a major. None of the fifteen officers had served in that rank for five years (the absolute minimum in the British Army, and that would be after seven years as a captain—again at least double the period spent in that rank by the Ghanaians), and only one third (Ashitey, Asafu-Adjaye, Acquaye-Nortey, Dedjoe and Tachie-Menson) had done more than two years. Of the rest, six—40 percent of all those promoted in the aftermath of the putsch—were promoted with less than twelve months as a major. On average, in fact, they had done only eight months. Asare and J.R.K. Acquah had been majors for seven months, Coker-Appiah for just six. With an average and median age of thirty-six at the time of their promotions, the new cohort of lieutenant-colonels was youthful and inexperienced by any standards. The fact that five of the group were aged thirty-two or less (and Gbagonah was only twenty-eight) serves to underline the neophytic character of the post-putsch pool of lieutenant-colonels.

However, it was within the cohort of pre-coup lieutenant-colonels that the structural rank and age aberrations were most marked. There were sixteen lieutenant-colonels before the coup. All of them were Infantry. Of these, fifteen were promoted before the end of 1966. The sole exception was Lieutenant-Colonel Addy who was promoted on 1 April 1967; however, he had been given the status of acting colonel a year earlier. The fifteen half colonels who were promoted in 1966 can be divided into three groups. The first of these were the Council members (Kotoka and Ocran) who

moved up more than one step on 24 February. The next of these were a set of ten officers, most of whom were privy to the coup; they were made colonels (and in Crabbe's case, brigadier) on 21 March. The slots they vacated were filled by officers from the group of ex-majors noted above. In the third tier were a trio of officers who were promoted later in the year, Lartey and Ewa in July and Adjeitey in November. Not unexpectedly, and in contrast to the majority of majors who were promoted, the lieutenant-colonels (with the exceptions of Adjeitey and Mensah-Brown who were commissioned in 1959 and 1961, respectively) were commissioned before Independence, mostly between 1954–1956, about two years on average before the majors.

When they were officially gazetted colonels or above, these officers had an average and median age of thirty-eight. Two of them, Kattah and Addo, were only thirty-three. In armies with more stable selection and promotion procedures, an officer of thirty-eight (who is more likely to be a major than anything else) would have been commissioned for about seventeen years. This rule of thumb did not apply to the men under review. One reason for this was that many of them had seen several years service in the ranks. Crabbe had been commissioned the longest, but even he had been an officer for as little as fourteen years. Lartey had been an officer for just under thirteen years; whilst Yarboi, Sanni-Thomas, Kotoka, Ocran, Ewa and Addy had seen approximately eleven years commissioned service each. All the other newly-promoted colonels had done less. Adjeitey, for instance, had been an officer for under eight years, Mensah-Brown for less than five.

To sum up this section, we find that fourteen of the sixteen officers had been commissioned for a dozen years or less, but the average period was ten and a half years. It is interesting to note, moreover, that these men had averaged only twenty-two months as majors (although Kotoka and Mensah-Brown had been majors for a mere two months, and one, Adjeitey, had actually been promoted lieutenant-colonel direct from captain) and thirty-one months as lieutenant-colonels. Eleven had been half colonels for twenty-seven months or less. In other words, the average promotional time from major to that of colonel was four and a half years.¹² For British officers, the norm would have been ten to twelve years—about two or three times as long.¹³

Examined together, twenty-eight of the thirty-three pre-coup majors and lieutenant-colonels were promoted through at least one rank by the end of 1966, most of them within a month of the Council's installation. Given the spectacular rates of the conspirators' upward mobility, the parallelism of rebel role in the coup and subsequent improvement in career position and prospects is easily discernible. Most of the remaining middle-ranking officers were promoted, albeit at a slower pace, in recognition of their political neutrality or tacit support on the night of 23/24 February.¹⁴ No doubt, a calculated and prudent sense of self-preservation on the part of the NLC was also involved since the promotions provided the non-Council officers with a stake in the new regime.

Further opportunities for the distribution of patronage were created by the retirements forced on Zanlerigu, Aferi, Hassan and others and by various public appointments and favours in the gift of the junta. Many of the coup-makers' promotions were linked to the command of a battalion or a brigade. Ashitey, for instance, was given the Fourth Battalion at Tema and Amenu took command of the Kumasi-based Second Brigade. But because there were simply not sufficient senior military jobs to go round, and in order to accommodate the over-promoted officers in positions commensurate with their ranks, vacancies were also created by seconding some men into civilian administrative posts, particularly at the regional committee level, and by postings to overseas courses. Major Dedjoe, Kotoka's former QM, was appointed chairman of the Volta Regional Committee for Administration. Colonels Lartey, Laryea and Yarboi were given similar positions in the Brong-Ahafo, Northern and Ashanti Regions, respectively. Others who were transferred to posts in the regional administrations included Idissah (Upper and then Northern Region), Coker-Appiah and Yeboah (Western Region), Addy (Eastern Region) and Acquaye-Nortey (Greater-Accra). As most of these examples suggest, there was a tendency to match the officers' ethnicity with their regional appointments—a trend that frequently resulted in divided loyalties.¹⁵

Those chosen for training at Commonwealth and American staff colleges included Brigadier Amenu who, after his tour as CO Second Brigade, left in 1967 for the US Army and Command Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Colonels Quaye, Kattah and Tevie, who went to the Joint Services Staff College at Latimer, England. Selection for such courses carried considerable *éclat* in the 1960s, as indeed it still does for the "been-to" officer today. Postings abroad also carried special allowances and other financial perks, particularly the rare opportunity of returning home with a new duty-free motorcar. Other sources of patronage available to the NLC included postings as special aides to Council members or to NLC-appointed commissions. For example, after the coup, Major Kwashie became Kotoka's special adviser; in May 1966, Major Agudu was appointed head of a commission to determine whether the people of Sefwi-Wiawo wanted Nana Kwadwo Aduhene reinstated as their Omanhene; and, in September 1966, Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Appiah was appointed to investigate the nature, extent and method of acquisition of specified Ghanaian citizens' assets.¹⁶

Officers who retired during the period of NLC rule were usually allocated influential jobs in the state sector. Lieutenant-Colonel E.G. Nyaku (Pay Service) became bursar at Ghana's Institute of Management and Public Administration, Major Hammond (General/QM Branch) joined the Department of State Protocol and Colonel Ewa left the army to become managing director of the Ghana Housing Corporation and then head of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust. Several senior civil servants suggested that, while a number of these officers were very good, many of them would not have filled the posts in open competition.¹⁷

Quite apart from the promotions, therefore, the Council had considerable scope for manoeuvre in distributing the fruits of office to the important

strata of middle and senior officers. Postings to command or to serve in prestigious units, selection for overseas specialist and staff training, secondment to the regional administrations and appointments to the boards of enquiries, committees and corporations, accounted for the bulk of patronage utilised by the junta to foster and accumulate support from its most vital constituents.

Such appointments were invariably linked to a radical alteration in life style, from the relative comfort of middle-ranking officers' quarters before February 1966, to the pampered luxury associated with offices and suites at Flagstaff House and the colonial-type regional residencies and at other state and para-statal institutions. There were higher salaries, new uniforms, visits abroad, improved domestic help and chauffeured *Peugeot* and *Mercedes* cars. Before the coup, these officers were irregular participants in Ghana's most exclusive social circles. After 24 February, they were at the very core of top governmental, diplomatic and private social functions: banquets at State House and the Castle; luncheons in the prosperous Labone estate and airport residential area cantonments; beach parties at Mile 13 and Kokradi and, after dusk, cocktails at the *Ambassador* and *Continental* hotels, dinner at one of the sophisticated Lebanese restaurants and, afterwards, on to a casino or night-club.

From their powerful positions, Ghana's new rulers dispensed government patronage (contracts, loans, jobs, tax concessions, special passes and other favours), in return for which they were the recipients of "gifts"—money (10-20 percent was the norm, usually in foreign currency), a gold *Omega*, a cutlery set or a car and access to sexual partners. Behind a screen of public propriety, the new men (like the CPP before them and the civilians and soldiers who came later) indulged in a new round of larceny and embezzlement for the purpose of diverting scarce public resources to themselves and allied groups. Many senior army and police officers became as ostentatious and apparently corrupt as those whom they had displaced, acquiring considerable fortunes, building large houses in Accra and their home villages and establishing their families and friends in lucrative commercial enterprises.¹⁸

The participation of the khaki-clad leaders in a political culture largely characterised by an interminable struggle between competing elites for the economic rewards and societal status obtained through government office was revealed, as it had been earlier with regard to the politicians in *kente*, in the preoccupation of the junta with the accumulation of wealth and self-bestowed promotions. But whilst it is true that every member of the armed forces benefited from the coup—even a private's pay was very high, some two and a half times that of an unskilled labourer—a developing mood of resentment at the uneven distribution of promotions and perks began to permeate the military establishment. These grievances climaxed in April 1967 when several subalterns staged an anti-NLC counter-coup. Their rebellion was very nearly successful.

The Junior Officers' Revolt¹⁹

On the night of 16/17 April 1967, eight weeks after the NLC made the mistake of awarding themselves further promotions on the first anniversary of the February coup, 120 troops from the Reconnaissance Regiment's B Squadron at Ho entered Accra in *Ferret* and *Saladin* armoured vehicles and attempted to seize control. The plan, code-named "Operation Guitar Boy," was led by Lieutenant Samuel Arthur, a twenty-seven year old Fanti who had been commissioned in September 1963. He was in temporary command of the unit while its regular commander, Captain Henry Ofosu-Appea, was absent on an armoured warfare course abroad. Taking advantage of an army-police operation in search of armed smugglers at Ziome near the Togo border, the rebels were re-routed to Accra. They entered the capital unchallenged.

Lieutenant Moses Yeboah, a twenty-eight year old Kwahu who had been commissioned at Teshie with Arthur in 1963, led the assault on Flagstaff House. Kotoka, who had his quarters there, was arrested and badly wounded. When he pleaded for medical attention, Yeboah reportedly shouted: "Did you know me when you were promoting yourself?"²⁰ Together with his ADC, Captain Cephas Borkloe, and his batman, Sergeant Osei Grunshie, Kotoka was repeatedly shot and died. Meanwhile at Osu Castle, Second-Lieutenant Emmanuel Osei-Poku, a twenty-two year old Fanti who had been an officer for precisely six months, blasted off the front gates. However, he was held at bay by guards under Sergeant Toussine, thereby providing General Ankrah with time to clamber over the Castle walls and swim two miles to the safety of Osu police station. The airport was occupied by a platoon under the command of Sergeant-Majors Doamekpor and Ofosu.

Arthur encountered no resistance at the radio station where his dawn broadcast announced the replacement of the Council with a new government headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Assasie, of the Parachute Battalion, and Majors S.M. Asante and Achaab. It seems that none of these three officers knew anything about the plot (the first two were in Accra in connection with a promotions exam); but Achaab, the Recce Regiment officer who had played a prominent part in the 1966 coup, was later imprisoned by the NLC for allegedly failing to offer resistance when he was captured by Lieutenant Arthur. For several hours, the Council's putative dissolution was repeated on the radio at half-hourly intervals (interspersed with classical and pop music). However, at 10 a.m., the voice of Captain Sowu, who identified himself as loyal to the regime, announced that the coup attempt had been foiled. Eventually, when the insurgents ran out of ammunition and Arthur failed to win over senior officers at Burma Camp, police units under Harlley's command recaptured the besieged buildings. It was at Burma Camp that Arthur shot Captain Avevor, another of the 1966 coup activists, when he refused to hand over the armoury keys.

For some time, no member of the NLC or army command emerged as a rallying-point for a counter-attack; there was an ominous vacuum for

several hours. When the rebellion finally faded out in mid-morning, it was not from the decisive action of loyal forces but from the deficiencies of the insurgents themselves. The curious, almost comic-opera, lack of persistence on the part of the junior ranks once initial objectives had been attained manifested itself in several ways: the Ho units began to run out of ammunition, yet they behaved as if the coup had succeeded; Yeboah fell asleep, apparently from the effects of smoking marijuana,²¹ the airport contingents were found loitering in the airport vicinity (having "taken" the control tower, the soldiers were clearly unsure of what they were supposed to do next) and at the Castle, Osei-Poku's men soon attracted an inquisitive crowd which, on discovering what was going on, turned out to beat the bewildered soldiers on the heads with pots and pans. Lieutenant Arthur, with more determination, tried to rally the support of senior officers at Burma Camp's operations room. But according to two of the officers present, Arthur was persuaded of the hopelessness of his mission and was talked into giving himself up.²²

Had it not been for the inadequacies of the rebels themselves, the irresoluteness of the military hierarchy would surely have resulted in severe casualties and the overthrow of the Council. Though firing at the Castle started some time before the attack on Flagstaff House—and Ankrah had managed to telephone a warning at an early stage—there was no reaction from the service chiefs. Major-General Bruce, the army commander, had not found it necessary to investigate the uprising; whilst Brigadier Crabbe, commander of the First Brigade, and navy commander Hansen are reported to have gone into hiding, apparently too confused or scared to move.

The army high command was weak in April 1967. This was partly due to frequent changes in its profile since July 1965 and also because the army members of the NLC, unlike their police colleagues, had not occupied their high service positions at the time of the February coup. In sharp contrast to the army, organisational continuity and seniority differentials in the police had been maintained. It was Inspector-General of Police Harlley who, with a tight grip on his force, provided the critical focus of support for the NLC, thereby enhancing the prestige and image of reliability of the police command in government circles.

Almost immediately, an investigation was begun headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Coker-Appiah. After a hurried military tribunal, the two principal conspirators, Arthur and Yeboah, were publicly executed by machine-gun on 26 May. The killings took place at the Teshie firing range where, twelve years later, three former heads of state and other senior officers were executed under Rawlings's AFRC. Osei-Poku received a thirty year sentence. Three other officers, including Achaab, and nine NCOs of the Ho Recce Squadron—which was disbanded—were also given prison terms. Over one hundred enlisted men were placed in custody, although they were subsequently released (in December) and discharged from the army. The relatively conciliatory attitude and leniency accorded the lower ranks indicates, perhaps, an attempt by the Council to retain support from those quarters, whilst

simultaneously providing a severe warning to their direct superiors and others.

The somewhat arbitrary and punitive nature of the enquiry, and the manner in which senior commands were switched, added to the general level of disaffection within the army and exposed the NLC to further vilification. Some individuals were simply reduced in rank without hearings, others were transferred without adequate explanation and there were rumours that several officers had avoided retribution because of friends in high places. The degree of disenchantment and low morale which the coup revealed, and the bitter taste left in its aftermath, led to a tightening of security and the appointment of M.A. Otu (who was senior both by enlistment and commissioning to Ocran) as GOC and CDS. Ocran was appointed army commander. Checkpoints were erected on all roads leading to Accra and the police were instructed to report all troop movements.

In order to leave more time for army and police matters, the Council also divested itself of many ministerial responsibilities. By July, civilian participation in the regime had been enlarged with the creation of an Executive Council composed of the NLC together with fourteen civilian commissioners who were assigned ministerial portfolios. However, certain members of the Council continued to hold responsibility for particularly sensitive areas. Ankrah, Harley and Afrifa retained the posts of Defence, External Affairs and the Interior, and Finance, respectively.²³ The centre of decision-making still remained firmly within the NLC; but after the death of Kotoka, the Council became increasingly prone to tensions and divisions rooted in ethnic, institutional (between army and police) and personal differences. Of greater import, however, was the effect that the counter-coup had on the pace of military-police disengagement from office together with the increasingly partisan alignment of individual NLC members with outside political factions.²⁴

The abortive putsch, then, came as a sharp shock to the regime. It brought the realisation that the junta had lost touch with the officers and men in the barracks (several officers later complained that the NLC had become gradually more "distant" and "aloof" from the army, one complainant grumbling that "they hardly even bothered coming to the mess after a while"²⁵), and it highlighted the inadequacy of the regime's security apparatus. Questions about the impact of NLC rule on the unity of the military were raised and exploited by the ex-Opposition for the purpose of hastening the speed of demilitarisation. Indeed, only a few weeks before the revolt, Kofi Busia had urged the Council to make way for civilian rule as quickly as possible. He argued that military regimes are by definition "notoriously and inherently unstable," that they inevitably caused serious intra-army factionalism and that sooner or later counter-coups would occur.²⁶

The dangers of prolonged military rule were also emphasised in a service journal editorial: "Our involvement in politics will undermine our solidarity and loyalty, dissipate our ranks, jeopardise our ability to perform our duties, and threaten our very existence."²⁷ And, as the warrant officers' and NCOs'

counter-coup in Sierra Leone against Brigadier Juxon-Smith's regime in April 1968 demonstrated, such lessons need not necessarily lose their force below the officer level. At his trial, Arthur claimed that the only difference between his operation and the coup of February 1966 was that his failed whereas the latter succeeded. The message was not lost on the junta and its politically ambitious advisers: better to disengage to a systematic plan than to risk all, including the possible re-emergence of a revengeful CPP or another "Operation Guitar Boy."

Ethnic and Generational Tensions

Another aspect of the rebellion was the widespread belief that it was a plot by Akans to eliminate from the army Gas and especially Ewes. One result of the 1966 coup (and the subsequent reshuffles and promotions) was to emphasise the over-representation of these minority ethnic groupings in the top ranks of the security forces. Before 24 February, Ewes and Gas were far from prominent in the top (as opposed to the middle and upper middle) echelons of the military establishment. Indeed, in Chapter 7, evidence was produced to show that Nkrumah distrusted officers from these communities and that he was moving against them. In particular, Bruce and Crabbe had been by-passed in the July 1965 postings and Kotoka had been appointed to the junior of the two brigade commands. And none of the battalions was commanded by an Ewe. After the coup—and in stark contrast—six of the top seven military appointments were in Ga or Ewe hands.

With particular regard to the latter group, Ewes were in a very powerful position since they held three of the eight Council seats as well as the combined post of GOC Armed Forces and CDS. In the barracks and elsewhere, there were allegations of a concerted plan by Ewes to take over the country's most influential positions. Such talk was encouraged by the fact that appointments in the army and police were controlled by two Ewes. As Inspector-General, John Harlley was responsible for all major appointments in the police. By April 1967, five of the six most senior posts were held by Ewes: Harlley was I-GP, Deku headed the CID, Mawuenyegah controlled Special Branch, Ajavan was in charge of the Prison Service and Akaba directed the Research Bureau.

Likewise, Kotoka controlled promotions and appointments in the military. As may be seen in Table 11.3, of the twenty army colonels and above at mid-April 1967, seven (35 percent) were Ewe, eight (40 percent) were Ga and only two (10 percent) were Akan. One officer (Ewa) was of Nigerian origin. No northerners were represented at these levels. Even if the rank of lieutenant-colonel is included in the sums, Ewes still accounted for 29 percent of the total. It is also significant (as Table 11.3 also indicates) that one of the two generals, one of the three brigadiers and five of the thirteen colonels—more than one third of the top eighteen slots—were in Ewe hands.

One explanation for the high proportion of Ewes in the senior hierarchy was that Ewes constituted the conspiratorial core against Nkrumah's CPP—

TABLE 11.3

ETHNIC/REGIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE SENIOR ARMY COMMAND,
16 APRIL 1967

Rank	Ga	Ewe	Akan	North	Other	Total
Lt.-General	1	1	-	-	-	2
Maj.-General	1	-	1	-	-	2
Brigadier	1	1	1	-	-	3
Colonel	5	5	2	-	1 ^a	13
Lt.-Colonel	2	3	9	-	-	14
Total	10	10	13	0	1	34

Sources: As for Table 3.4.

^a Naturalised Ghanaian of Nigerian origin (Colonel J.M. Ewa).

and it was this group that had benefited most from the post-coup promotions. Whatever the reason (and another is suggested below), it was a widely shared belief that the 1966 coup marked a watershed in the Ewe ascendancy. Perceptions of ethnic bias and favouritism, and the fact that the only officers killed in the coup (Kotoka, Borkloe and Aveyvor) were Ewe, explain the tribal complexion given to the young officers' revolt. To the government, the promotions were justifiable in terms of initiative in the coup as well as to considerations of seniority; but to those who were not raised in rank, and whose promotional prospects seemed imperiled by the precipitate elevation of their superiors or peers, it appeared that the ethnic minorities were reserving senior posts for their own. In this uncertain environment, in which constant comparisons were made with course-mates and colleagues, it was not unnatural to assume that such patterns of primordial partiality would be maintained in future.

It remained for Ankrah to dismiss as a "wicked rumour which is absolutely untrue" gossip "that the insurrection led by Arthur was planned by Ashantis and Fantis against Gas and Ewes."²⁸ But the statement, which Ankrah felt compelled to make, did little to dispel ethnic interpretations of the plot since once the army entered government it had to make policy decisions, the inevitable result of which was to make it as prone to primary social loyalties as those faced by political parties. There are dangers to the unity of the armed forces to be considered where ethnic tensions outside the military provide a stimulus for the operation of such cleavages within it. Ethnic differences always have a relative character. They assume different meanings and intensities according to subjective definitions of the situation.

The country was now being ruled by soldiers and policemen and their appointments to the administration were as avidly followed by the population as had been the case in Nkrumah's Ghana.²⁹ Ankrah's denial of an anti-

Ewe element in the abortive coup was not the first time he showed sensitivity to accusations of tribalism. For instance, following reports of "grumbling in some quarters that a number of prominent and responsible posts have been given to Ewe people," Ankrah felt obliged to say: "I can assure you that there is no consideration to create an empire of Ewes" in Ghana. On another occasion, when announcing moves to reorganise the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, he gave assurances that there was no plan to remove Fantis and "Ewenise" the GBC.³⁰ Thus, after the coup, the rising prominence of Ewe officers (actual and perceived), and the reaction from non-Ewes, particularly Akans, was increasingly polarising politics along ethnic and communal lines with Afrifa and Busia representing Akan—and especially Ashanti—political aspirations and Harlley and Deku supporting the political ambitions of Gbedemah and other Ewe leaders.

As was suggested in Chapter 1, the significance of ethnicity in creating bonds between members of the same tribal group may be diluted by other bases of differentiation within organisations; but in 1967 Ghana, cleavages between senior and junior generations of officers largely coincided with parochial attachments. The indirect reason for this state of affairs was explained in Chapter 3. The first men to be commissioned were those who served in the ranks and whose promotions were hastened by Independence and indigenisation. In the 1950s, the low status of the military, as well as alternative career opportunities, discouraged educated youths from the more economically advanced areas from enlisting, whereas the possibility of upward mobility made an army career attractive to the sons of humble Ewe fishermen and farmers. For this reason, by the mid-1960s, a disproportionate number of senior positions were filled with Ewes, by which time prejudice towards the armed forces had been markedly reduced. But a decade after Independence, there were many well-educated officers of Akan extraction who considered themselves better qualified than their superiors, whose rapid elevation to senior posts was, in their eyes, a matter of timing and luck rather than merit. To make matters worse, the very youthfulness of the high-ranking officers constituted an obstacle to the subalterns' own career aspirations. It is against such a tapestry of interwoven societal and organisational variables that the junior officers' revolt should be viewed.

Of the various concepts that might be employed to throw further light on the growing hostility of many junior officers to their superordinates and the outburst of anomic violence in 1967, there is one of special importance. This is the concept of relative deprivation. Its central significance as an explanation for the darkening mood and demoralisation within the army is linked to other sociological phenomena such as individual and group patterns of expectation and definition of situation. What is *thought* to be happening is frequently more important than what is happening. Robert Merton has justifiably argued that

"Deprivation" is the incidental and particularised component of the concept of relative deprivation, whereas the more significant nucleus of the concept is its stress upon social and psychological experience as "relative". . . . It is

the *relative* component, the standards of comparison in self-evaluation, that this concept has in common with social frame of reference, patterns of expectation, or definition of the situation.³¹

As during the last years of Nkrumah's First Republic, when the regular armed forces felt deprived, the practice of comparing one's own position with that of others frequently resulted in a sense of relative dissatisfaction. For present purposes, the basis of comparison may be examined at two levels of analysis. In the first place, we can examine attitudes influenced by comparison with the situation of others with whom an individual shared a similar status or social category. Here the example of a captain who compared his lot with other pre-coup captains who had been promoted once (e.g. Achaab) or several times (e.g. Afrifa) is relevant. The second basis of comparison is with those individuals who were of a different status or social category, as in the case of the subaltern comparing his job prospects with middle-ranking officers, or comparisons being made by non-combat officers and NCOs with combat officers and junta members, respectively. Perceptions of relative deprivation would have been given an additional twist where discrimination in promotion was viewed in ethnic terms.

There can be no doubt that these several kinds of comparison were being made within the armed forces. During the first few months of 1967, prominent Ghanaians were receiving leaflets from the League of Young Army Officers, alleging corruption in the Council, denouncing the record of the new rulers, commenting on the wealth and property acquired by NLC officers and demanding a change. The League's members were never identified, but there was resentment at both the uneven distribution of rewards after the coup and the police share of NLC power. The Nigerian army officers, it was said, had not promoted themselves after the 1966 coups. In his account of army-police rule, Ocran refers to "grumbling and indiscipline" in the army which manifested itself "in a spate of anonymous and threatening letters to senior officers."³² Another officer, a captain in April 1967, said "there was a great deal of talk in the junior ranks that the senior officers, especially those involved in government, were doing exactly what Nkrumah did. It was a setback for the army."³³

At his court martial, Lieutenant Arthur admitted that mess talk frequently settled on the subject of promotions and on the "top-heavy" nature of the army. On one occasion, in March 1967, Lieutenant Odonkor of the Recce Regiment arrived at Ho from Accra and described how army promotion examinations had been made especially tough in an attempt to prevent bottle-necks in the middle ranks. According to newspaper reports of the tribunal proceedings, the young officers began to compare their fates with Council members and with those officers who took an active part in the coup. It also emerged that Arthur had failed his promotion exam held in September 1966, the results of which were released on 4 April 1967. Second-Lieutenant Collison, commissioned on the same date as Osei-Poku in October 1965, claimed that Council members "just add the pip when they feel like it." "From that day on," Arthur informed a subsequent court hearing, "I

began to develop a hatred for all senior officers, especially the colonels and above." Council members, mess talk said, were feathering their nests; they had turned their backs on the spirit of the February coup.³⁴ In the coup master-plan, found in Arthur's possession, were arrangements for killing all NLC members, as well as every senior officer down to and including lieutenant-colonel.

Allegations about the top-heavy profile of the officer corps were, in fact, accurate. As is demonstrated in Table 11.4, there was a substantial increase in the number of middle-ranking and senior officers (majors and above) as a result of the promotions. On the eve of the 1966 coup, there were thirty-five majors and above. By April 1967, there were forty-seven. During the same period, the number of lieutenant-colonels and higher increased by almost 62 percent (from twenty-one to thirty-four), while officers in the rank of colonel and above quadrupled from five to twenty. However, it was at full colonel level that this expansion was most evident. Before the coup, there were only three colonels; a month later, there were ten and by April 1967 no less than thirteen. It should be stressed that the swollen number of officers in the higher echelons cannot be explained by a proportionate increase in the size of the officer corps as a whole since the number of regular combat commissions held increased from 367 in February 1966 to 402 in April 1967—a jump of only 9.5 percent.³⁵

Table 11.4 also provides data on the number of officers at each rank at various dates between 1957 and 1967. After the coup, the percentage of the officer corps in the rank of lieutenant-colonel and above increased from 5.8 to 8.4, in the rank of brigadier and above from 0.6 to 1.7, and at colonel and above to 4.9 from 1.4. Finally, in this respect, it is important to note the very large proportion of the officers—67.3 percent in February 1966 and 60 percent fourteen months later—at the lieutenant and second-lieutenant levels. In the British Army, these gradings contain approximately one fifth (21.7 percent in 1967) of all officers;³⁶ but in Ghana, where rapid expansion of the military meant that the officer corps was filled with personnel of roughly the same age, it is not difficult to comprehend the emergence of frustration and intrigue in the lower-middle and junior ranks due to limited promotional prospects.

Many of the same officers who had watched the majors and captains of 1959 climb to brigadier and colonel in 1961 now witnessed the unedifying spectacle of the lieutenant-colonels of 1965 appointing themselves three, two and one star generals in 1967. The status anomalies deriving from the compression of upward mobility rates into a short space of time were accentuated by the absence of significant age differentials between the officer rank echelons. The majors of early 1967 were less than three years younger than the lieutenant-colonels and only four years junior to the colonels. Some half and full colonels were younger (in some cases very much younger) than the majority of majors. What is more, a few were actually junior in age to many captains. Careful scrutiny of the senior officers' age structure highlights similar aberrations from that which is normal in armies with

TABLE 11.4
RANK DISTRIBUTION OF THE GHANAIAN OFFICER CORPS, (REGULAR COMBAT ONLY)^a, 1957-1967

Rank	06.03.1957 ^b		23.09.1961 ^c		23.02.1966		16.04.1967	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Lt.-General	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	(0.5)
Maj.-General	-	-	1	(0.7)	1	(0.3)	2	(0.5)
Brigadier	-	-	2	(1.4)	1	(0.3)	3	(0.7)
Colonel	-	-	1	(0.7)	3	(0.8)	13	(3.2)
Lt.-Colonel	-	-	4	(2.8)	16	(4.4)	14	(3.5)
Major	3	(10.3)	20	(13.9)	14	(3.8)	13	(3.2)
Captain	15	(51.7)	16	(11.1)	85	(23.2)	114	(28.4)
Lieutenant	10	(34.5)	44	(30.6)	193	(52.3)	208	(51.8)
2nd Lieutenant	1	(3.4)	58	(40.3)	55	(15.0)	33	(8.2)
Total	29	(100.0)	144	(100.0)	367	(100.0)	402	(100.0)

Sources: As for Table 9.2.

^a Arms A, B, C, D, E, F and G of Table 4.1.

^b The figures here represent African officers only. The total number of officers in the army, including non-combat officers and those holding short service commissions, was 238.

^c The figures for 23 September 1961 differ slightly from those represented in Table 6.1. This is because Table 6.1 includes officers from the other two armed services (e.g. M.A. Otu and D. Hansen) whilst (unlike the data above) excluding officers who were commissioned after 23 September 1961 but whose seniority was officially gazetted as prior to that date.

stable succession rates. The average age of the lieutenant-generals was only thirteen years above that of their company commanders. Only a twelve month gap separated the major-generals from the colonels; whilst the average age of the brigadiers was actually the same as the lieutenant-colonels and two years younger than the colonels.

In this chapter attention has been focused on the impact of military rule on the internal condition of the army. At first glance, and at several levels of analysis, it was relatively straightforward to substantiate the point that the military and police establishments were the principal beneficiaries of the coup. Clearly, the ruling army-police Council was expeditious in wielding its power to improve the status, career opportunities and attendant remuneration and perks of the armed services. No opportunity was lost to emphasise the threats to the regular forces which the overthrow of Nkrumah's CPP had removed and the advantages which accrued from army and police domination of the state machinery. As one would expect, the ruling junta was unequivocally anxious to ensure that its main constituents—the power base represented by the soldiers and policemen in barracks—were given a material and psychological stake in the regime. In return, the uniformed politicians, the new patron-distributors of scarce resources in Ghana's political economy, looked for loyalty and support.

That the Council was sensitive to the requirements of preserving existing army authority patterns was evidenced, it has been suggested, by the appointments held by Ankrah, Bruce and Crabbe. But these exceptions were insufficient to disguise the extravagantly uneven promotions that swiftly followed on the coup. Unfortunately, the Council's lop-sided and variable dispensation of patronage, particularly the excessive benefits that the army leaders bestowed on those who had been instrumental in the coup, seriously undermined the military's internal cohesion and stability. This preoccupation with matters of status and material security was particularly well expressed among the leaders of the putsch who, in the fourteen months after 24 February 1966, promoted themselves as many as four times.

Overall, these developments contributed to a further metamorphosis in the organisation's hierarchical profile, leading to serious resentment at lower levels. Intergenerational antagonisms between older officers (who had come up through the ranks to be commissioned prior to 1960) and younger officers (with fewer vested interests in the junta's survival) were sharpened by disparities in the ethnic composition as between different career generations. By April 1967, 75 percent of officers at colonel and above belonged to the minority Ewe and Ga groups, a disproportionately high figure viewed with deep distrust by officers whose primordial alignments had been catalysed by perceptions of a "tribal conspiracy" in the coup and NLC rule. Such suspicions acquired additional saliency from the coincidence of rank and generational cleavages with attachments of an ethnic/regional character.

To some extent, then, the junior officers' counter-coup was ethnically oriented; but it was also inspired by the sight of senior officers bypassing professional career procedures and, to use the words of one man who was

a lieutenant in 1967, "making themselves good."³⁷ And by toppling the CPP, the new leaders had demonstrated the mechanism for "making good." The 1966 insurgents had broken the British-bequeathed taboo against military intervention, killing and dismissing their superiors in the process. In so doing, and by their failure to establish regularised promotion and succession rates, the coup leaders had initiated a precedent for military action which brought the armed forces in as a self-interested, though internally unsettled, actor and arbiter in Ghanaian domestic politics.

Notes

1. Under the NLC, "Themsay" became a popular colloquialism for any improvement in service wages and conditions. It was so called because of the rank-and-file's habit of speculating about what Them (the Council) would dish out to the troops. Variations on "Them say we shall get more pay/allowances," etc., were common barrack-room gossip.

2. E.W. Lefever, *Spear and Scepter: Army, Politics and Police in Tropical Africa* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1970), p.78.

3. Details on military benefits from *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 3 (February 1968) and 1, 6 (October 1969); A.K. Ocran, *A Myth is Broken* (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), Chapter 4; and interview, Brigadier F.W.K. Akuffo, 28 February 1974.

4. *Daily Graphic*, 19 July 1967.

5. In accepting the Mills-Odoi Commissions's recommendations on pay, the NLC was responsible for pay increases of 12 percent for a recruit (from NC300 to NC336 a year) and 23.4 percent for the Inspector-General (from NC6,000 to NC7,404). *Report of the Commission on the Structure and Remuneration of the Public Services in Ghana* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1968), p.49.

6. *Ghanaian Times*, 26 March 1966.

7. Data on police reorganisation and appointments as for sources in Appendix B.

8. Aferi was furious at the treatment he received: "I was not invited to join them, and anyway I didn't want to have anything to do with that bumped up lot. They were small boys. Some of them were cadets when I commanded my first battalion." Interview, 29 April 1974.

9. Interview, Brigadier F.W.K. Akuffo, 28 February 1974.

10. The only two majors not promoted during this phase were S.K. Acquah and S.M. Asante, both of whom had only just been made majors.

11. J.C.M. Baynes, *The Soldier in Modern Society* (Edinburgh: Macmillan, 1969), p.118. See, too, H. Stanhope, *The Soldiers: An Anatomy of the British Army* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), pp.72-75.

12. Fourteen of the pre-coup lieutenant-colonels had been promoted major in September 1961, when Nkrumah Africanised his officer corps; and fourteen were promoted half colonel in September 1964. Kotoka and Adjeitey had been promoted earlier, in 1961.

13. Baynes, *The Soldier in Modern Society*, p.118.

14. Data on the promotion rates of all middle-ranking officers (majors and lieutenant-colonels) are available for detailed scrutiny in Appendix D.

15. Interview, Lt.-Colonel W.C.O. Acquaye-Nortey, 18 March 1974: "It was very difficult to resist demands from your own people, even if it conflicted with government policy."

16. *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 5 (June 1969), p.4.
17. Interviews, Mr Q.K.K. King-Bruce, 6 May 1974; and Mr Frank Beecham, 2 May 1974.
18. Most publicised was the case of Ankrah. He was forced to resign his post as NLC chairman in March 1969 when it emerged that he had accepted money from a certain Francis Nzeribe and other businessmen. It seems that Ankrah was connected with moves to form a Ga-based political movement, presumably so that a party could be organised around him which would further his presidential ambitions. Soon after, Nunoo, a Ga like Ankrah, was dismissed for publicly disclosing confidential discussions about Ankrah's dismissal. There were also allegations that several Council members had had houses built for them by a construction company (*Laing*) in return for building contracts.
19. Although the general outline of the coup is well-known, useful additional details, especially concerning the extent of junior officer dissatisfaction about promotions, were provided in lengthy discussions with Major W.C. Amaning (CO of the Recce Regiment in 1974 when he was interviewed). Amaning was a captain in April 1967. See, also, press reports of court proceedings in the *Ghanaian Times* of late April and early May 1967; and *West Africa*, 6 and 13 May 1967. Data on events of 16/17 April is also drawn from R. First, *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat* (Harmondsworth: Penguin African Library, 1970), pp.398-403; and L.H. Ofori-Appiah, *The Life of Lt.-General Kotoka* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1972), Chapter 9.
20. *Ghanaian Times*, 6 May 1967.
21. The smoking of Indian hemp, which is cheap and plentiful in Ghana, appears to have been quite common amongst junior officers and soldiers.
22. Interviews, Brigadier A.K. Kattah, 23 May 1975; and Colonel J.M. Ewa, 13 February 1974.
23. Soon after, the Political Committee was abolished and replaced by a National Advisory Committee of 31 members. This figure included the 14 civilian commissioners. The NAC was dissolved in its turn, in November 1968, in order to free members for the 1969 election. For details of membership and functions, see *West Africa*, 8, 15 and 22 July 1967.
24. For details, see the studies on the NLC listed in Note 1, Chapter 10, especially those of Hutchful and Saffu.
25. Interview, Lt.-Colonel C.K. Enninful, 11 August 1975.
26. Quoted in *One Year After the Coup* (Accra: Ministry of Information, 3 March 1967). Busia's warning was later used by his opponents in an unsuccessful attempt to implicate him in the mutiny.
27. *Ghana Armed Forces Magazine* 1, 5 (June 1969), p.4.
28. *Ghanaian Times*, 19 April 1967.
29. According to the memoirs of one junta member, it was "not uncommon to relate appointments and promotions to tribal considerations: 'Officer X has been appointed the Regional Commissioner for BAGO because he happens to be of that tribe. My tribe has not been represented. No one is taking care of our interests.' This is how most officers' minds work . . . the Liberation Council had to yield to tribal considerations sometimes." A.K. Ocran, *Politics of the Sword* (London: Rex Collings, 1977), p.122. For similarities with the CPP era, see K. Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p.66.
30. *West Africa*, 28 January 1967.
31. R.K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Glencoe, 1957), p.235.

32. Ocran, *Politics of the Sword*, p.110.
33. Interview, Colonel L.K. Kwaku, 5 August 1975.
34. Details from First, *The Barrel of a Gun*, p.399.
35. Computed from *The Army Seniority Roll*, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967).
36. Baynes, *The Soldier in Modern Society*, p.114.
37. Interview, Major R.E. Tamakloe, 22 February 1974.

12

Conclusions: The Pumpkin Blossoms from the Roots

In the Introduction, the aims of this study were described as threefold: to investigate the relationship of the military, especially the army officer corps, to the country's wider social structure and political forces; to examine changes in the organisational format and functions of the army resulting from localisation and the transfer of military authority; and, finally, to offer a descriptive historical analysis of civil-military relations in Nkrumah's Ghana. All three emphases are clearly connected.

The central proposition of this book is that throughout the period reviewed here—from the gradual transfer of political authority during the 1950s, through the era of military expansion and diversification, to the army-police coup in 1966 and the abortive revolt a year later—it was Africanisation (and the speed of its implementation) that provides the greatest explanatory force for the deterioration in the army's internal solidarity and the total transformation of the inherited format of control. These institutional changes were themselves related to British policies under colonial rule, as well as being a product of Nkrumah's foreign policy designs.

It was thought expedient to begin this study with a chapter on the Ghana Army's precursor, the Gold Coast Regiment of the Royal West African Frontier Force. The RWAFF had its origins in the garrisoned militias first raised in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to guard trading companies from hostile natives. It was established not with regard to the future requirements of what were later to become the independent states of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, but in response to British imperial defence requirements in, and during World War II outside, Africa. While the RWAFF was a regional force, its four constituent parts were recruited territorially, with the result that each colonial formation

The subtitle of this chapter is an Akan proverb, *Efere firi n'ase na ebum*, meaning "A sound foundation makes for a good superstructure."

was able to preserve substantial organisational continuity in the immediate wake of empire.

For the most part, the Gold Coast Regiment was used, in conjunction with the police, to "show the flag," to defend the colony's territorial frontiers and to cope, in support of the civil authority, with internal disturbances. Throughout its existence of more than half a century, it also had implications as an agent of social change and political consciousness. Service in the Regiment offered opportunities and advantages where it concerned the acquisition of skills, trades, regular pay, education, travel and social mobility. It was not surprising, therefore, that ex-servicemen were to play a prominent role in the post-war surge of popular nationalist discontent which resulted in the 1951 elections and Nkrumah's appointment as leader of government business. The development of the military forces may be seen, therefore, as a product of a long but continuous process of social and political change associated with colonial contact and subjugation, a process which in turn led to further changes in political relations culminating in Independence.

The uneven impact of colonialism, and the disjointed relinquishment of executive power (which, understandably, put defence at the bottom of the timetable), largely accounted for the key social characteristics of the army in March 1957. And underlying the inherited pattern of structures and traditions was a method of control that emphasised military subordination to the civil power in which the officer corps is disciplined by its own professionalism. It was the British hope that this model would be successfully transplanted to take root in Ghana.

With regard to social composition, the national and ethnic make-up of the army at Independence was distinguished by at least three characteristics. First of all, there was the very visible racial distinction. Most of the senior ranks (WOs and NCOs), and all of the top and middle-grade commissioned posts, were occupied by whites. Only twenty-nine officers, from a total complement of 238, were black. None of these held a higher position than major and no independent commands were held by Africans.

In the second place, there was a marked ethnic/regional imbalance in the Ghanaian officer corps. With only two exceptions, the black officers were recruited from the economically and educationally more advanced coastal and southern areas. An important clue to this outcome was the differential spread of modernisation in the colonial phase referred to earlier. What is more, two coastal peoples, the Ga and the Ewe, accounted for almost 60 percent of the African officers. The dominance of these groupings, which was one outcome of the British pattern of recruitment, was important in aligning significant sections of the officer corps to opposition politicians, especially to the advances of Ga and Ewe leaders who had merged with others to form the United Party. In particular, and as was illustrated in Chapter 8, there is evidence of long-standing Ewe hostility from the early 1950s to Nkrumah's CPP. Similarities in the social origin and experiences of Anlo Ewes were also to be crucial determinants in the structure of the anti-CPP conspiracy. The ethnic homogeneity of the rebel group was, therefore, no mere coincidence.

Finally, but of no less significance, the enlisted infantrymen were drawn overwhelmingly from the backward hinterland of the Northern Territories. Most of these were Muslims from one or other of the four Gur-speaking peoples. In all, they accounted for some two thirds of the rank-and-file. However, it was not to these men but to the better educated southerners, who had been enlisted by Giffard for war service between 1939-1945, that the Gold Coast Regiment first looked for indigenous officer material.

The predominance of northerners in the ranks was yet another legacy of imperial defence policy. It will be recalled that, as a result of experience in India, the British military authorities were convinced that certain tribes were inherently more suitable for soldiering than others. The "warrior races" were admired not only for their supposed martial qualities but also for their political and educational characteristics or—to be more precise—for their lack of sophistication in such matters. Recruited from regions far removed from extensive colonial and trading activity, they could be reliably used for punitive reprisals and internal security operations in troublespots further south.

This particular dimension of colonial rule had two repercussions that were important for the army's internal structure and task *after* March 1957. In the first place, it affected the domestic reputation of the military. The army as a whole suffered from a poor image in local eyes. One aspect of this was that very few southerners with any education were inclined to join up. Secondly, and as a partial consequence of the above, it had relevance where it concerned the matter of Africanisation. With the political withdrawal of the metropolitan power, there was a paucity of suitable material for promotion to officer status: very few soldiers with the formal educational qualifications or professional qualities were available for elevation to commissioned rank. In short, the British predilection for employing illiterate northerners, which contributed to but was not the only reason for the low esteem in which the military was held, meant that at Independence a black government relied for its security on an army officered almost totally by foreigners.

Initially, at least, Nkrumah was quite content to leave military matters to the British CDS and the ranking European staff under his command. The unbroken employment of expatriates in the key military positions, and the uninterrupted dependence on Britain for equipment and officer training, ensured that continuity in the security services was maintained following the attainment of Independence. In addition, the retention of British officers undoubtedly consolidated the Western concept of the army's subordination to its political masters, thereby providing a tangible deterrent to unconstitutional action.

But the transfer of political power from the metropole to Accra, and the conversion of the colonial armed forces into a nominally national army, acted as a catalyst on officer localisation. As seen in Chapter 5, this process was checked by revelations of Captain Awhaitey's clandestine connections with Ewe politicians of the Togoland Congress. The incident and the

commission of enquiry that followed—revealing as it did the first hard evidence of subversive contacts between soldiers and civilian rivals of the ruling elite—alerted the CPP to the possibility of a putsch from a standing army and confirmed the leadership in the shrewdness of extending expatriate contracts in the middle and senior command. For the moment, therefore, the idea of Africanisation was shelved; white officers would remain as a bulwark to the regime's security.

Why then the sudden expulsion of Europeans in 1961? The explanation lies, it has been argued, in issues beyond Ghana's frontiers, in Nkrumah's growing preoccupation with pan-African objectives. It entailed the immediate down-grading of internal security considerations for radical foreign policy objectives involving the president's vision of African liberation and unity. Conflict in the Congo precipitated the decision, yet paradoxically it highlighted the very vulnerabilities of the army. These weaknesses argued for a preservation of the *status quo*. In particular, one might reflect on the Tshiakiapa mutiny and the brutalities inflicted on the Ghanaian contingent at Kasai. For the government, the substitution of white with black officers was crucial if it was to avoid the taunts of other non-aligned states competing for leadership of the continent. What in essence was at stake, therefore, was the question of image; and the decision resolved the apparently irreconcilable contradictions inherent in Nkrumah's ambivalent attitude towards his European officers. There was no *via media*. If Ghana's international designs were to have any credibility, the expatriates had to go.

Once the British disengagement from executive military authority was complete, two issues dominated developments in the armed forces. One was the vexatious issue of army loyalties, a problem that became all the more acute following a series of near-fatal attacks on the president. These incidents encouraged Nkrumah in his suspicions about the reliability of his military and police forces—particularly in light of armed coups that had occurred elsewhere in the Third World. The other pressing problem concerned the recruitment, deployment and promotion of Ghanaians to fill the positions vacated by Alexander and his British staff. This, too, was to have far-reaching consequences for the structural coherence of the army.

Over the matter of protecting the regime, Nkrumah embarked on a determined strategy to diversify sources of military assistance (epitomised by, but not limited to, the dispatch of cadets to Moscow) and raise new security and intelligence formations that would rival the regular armed forces. The programme, which was a qualitative leap forward from the more limited efforts of aid diversification and positive neutralism described in Chapter 4, was centred on the creation of a National Security Service, responsible not to the ministry of defence but directly to the presidential office.

The new order, relying as it did on East European and Cuban-trained cadres, was the very antithesis of the Western-type army acquired from the British. Nevertheless, the regular army continued to exist (albeit under constant threat of dismantlement) parallel to the new forces in a split

arrangement of institutionalised dualism. In format and methods, the profile of the NSS, with its own independent intelligence units and well-equipped Presidential Guard, was reminiscent of—indeed, it was structured upon—the Soviet system of “apparat” control, salient features of which include political indoctrination of servicemen, covert surveillance of suspect personnel and close party supervision in the appointment of reliable officers to sensitive commands. With reference to the last point, and for reasons delineated in Chapter 7, this explains the positive discrimination in favour of Nzimas and northerners. Given time, Nkrumah’s rejection of the liberal democratic objective model of control in favour of the subjective one, and the divisive techniques concurrently applied to undermine the interventionist potential of the military, might well have succeeded in its aims. It did not because the conventional army and police services were able to strike at, and eliminate, the countervailing forces before they were themselves rendered ineffective.

Efforts to organisationally neutralise the security forces through a mixture of ethnic-related and functional techniques were complicated by a second issue confronting Nkrumah in September 1961: the CPP now found itself presiding over an army that had substantial gaps in its officer ranks. And the deleterious consequences of hurriedly filling these vacancies was compounded by the expanding size of the military and the related necessity of finding sufficient cadets to supply more junior posts.

It will be recalled that the terminal period of colonial rule was characterised by a British reluctance to accelerate the rate of Ghanaianisation in the army. This was in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing in the civilian bureaucracy where the transition was more advanced. A number of propositions were advanced to suggest why insufficient numbers of suitable candidates were available. The reader will not be subjected to a repetition of that discussion here, save to remind him/her that at Independence only a sixth of officers were of indigenous stock. Before the end of 1961, localisation had been completed and the process of internal destabilisation had developed a momentum that continued well beyond the era of CPP rule. The impact of these changes—one concerned with the effects of Africanisation at all levels of the hierarchy, the other solely with disturbances in the top echelons—will be reviewed separately in order to submit some tentative conclusions about their individual and combined consequences.

In his essay on continuity in established bureaucratic organisations, Grunsky has argued that not only are high succession rates a typical characteristic of armies but also that they encourage the development of an institution’s total authority—though possibly at the expense of personal executive power.¹ But in new bureaucracies subject to the strains of frequent societal change, the routinisation of rapid succession cannot be assured in the same fashion. The problem of personnel replacement is exacerbated if the authority of individual officers is overly undermined by frequent transfers. It may be argued that, in such a situation, personal executive power is weakened without the compensation of increased general orientation and

loyalty to the organisation as a whole. It would appear (from the arguments advanced in Chapter 6) that this is precisely what happened in the Ghanaian case. The underlying hypothesis adopted here is that the inability of the political and military leaders to establish, and then stabilise, their authority was critically linked to, firstly, the frequent changes in the top military command and, secondly, to the commensurately high velocity of vertical and horizontal mobility that resulted throughout the organisation.

During the decade under review, the top army hierarchy was overhauled four times, twice before the coup and twice afterwards. Disregarding for the moment Paley's replacement by Alexander in early 1960, and the creation of competing security formations soon after, the first was in September 1961 when the Congo exigency caused Nkrumah to dispense with his European staff. The pretext was that the British CDS was proceeding too sluggishly with the programme of Africanisation. S.J.A. Otu and J.A. Ankrah, the two most senior Ghanaians, were promoted to take over from General Alexander and his deputy, Brigadier Le Patourel. The five black officers who had been commissioned in 1950-1951 (whose promotions had already been accelerated in 1959-1960) took command in the remaining senior ranks. Next, in July 1965, Otu and Ankrah were themselves summarily dismissed. They went because they had forfeited Nkrumah's confidence in them. In the subsequent reshuffle, Aferi was appointed CDS and Barwah army commander.

Only seven months later, Aferi found himself promoting Ghana's interests as an ambassador in Latin America and Barwah had been shot. The 1966 coup was followed by a comprehensive transformation in the top ranks as Ankrah, Kotoka and Bruce filled the senior commands as C-in-C, GOC/CDS and army commander, respectively. At the same time, numerous individuals were rewarded for their role in the rebellion and promoted to replenish the positions of purged officers closely identified with the CPP party-machine.

Ineffectiveness on the part of service and brigade commanders in coming to the junta's assistance during the decisive hours of the 1967 revolt led to new upheavals. The implication was that they had failed to take initiatives or show any enthusiasm in defence of the regime, but the outcome followed a by now all too familiar pattern. Almost immediately, Major-General Bruce, army commander, and Rear-Admiral Hansen, the navy chief, were appointed to diplomatic missions abroad. Brigadier Crabbe, who commanded the First Brigade, also lost his job.²

The interminable nature of these dislocations did not end here. In fact, evidence relating to the period up to 1969, when Busia's Progress Party won the election, throughout the period of PP rule abruptly terminated by Acheampong's coup in January 1972, demonstrates that the cycle of disruptions continued. In short, events after 1967 underline the decisive trends described in this study.³

It must be stressed that the high turnover rates that regularly punctuated the military's senior ranks in these years was accompanied by an unnaturally

rapid rate of vertical and horizontal fluidity as officers were transferred up, or across, the organisation to fill vacant posts at subordinate levels. For example, during the years 1960–1967, when the First Brigade had seven different commanders, the First Battalion had six. Succession rates at battalion second-in-command and company levels were equally transient. Whatever the reason for such turmoil, one thing seems perfectly clear: the cumulative effect of these integrated patterns of rapid mobility up through the hierarchy, together with high turnover in individual postings, made it almost impossible to regulate stable lines of command and control. What is being said is that all the top commanders had been appointed to their jobs in dramatic political circumstances. These changes had, in turn, necessitated readjustments at lower levels. Thus, throughout these years, the military landscape presents an image of perpetual flux. These shifts constituted, in a very real sense, the major fount of repeated challenges to the validity of the profession's corporate identity.

But Africanisation brought additional sources of strain that were superimposed on those just catalogued. So far in this study, it has been possible to observe some of the underlying historical processes and events which shaped the commissioned ranks. The creation of a military elite—a status that was slow to gain public recognition, largely because of traditional prejudices towards the army and the limited education of officers—was hastened by the departure of expatriates not long after Independence. Within a very short space of time, officers whose formal educational qualifications, military training and command experience were frequently deficient, found themselves in positions that should really have been occupied by men with more extensive knowledge and skills. This state of affairs promoted friction based on rank cleavages, with adverse consequences for the authority system of the total institution.

The view has already been noted that high rates of succession in long-standing and stable military bureaucracies are not only normal but that they are also integrative of the wider organisation. If this is so, social tensions and institutional collapse need not necessarily arise from the mere existence of hierarchies and associated inequalities of power and prestige. In part, this can be explained by the fact that individuals in a stratified system have usually been well socialised into their respective roles. However, if there are status inconsistencies with regard, for instance, to caste, age, ethnicity, education and ability, one would expect tensions to occur. Where such discrepancies are combined with uncertain expectations about the future, differential enjoyment of material rewards and gaps between anticipation and fulfilment, the propensity for conflict would be all the greater.

In the Ghana case examined here, it was not difficult for those officers commissioned after 1957, but especially after 1960, to discern status anomalies in the military pecking order. This was because their superiors' positions on different indices of social hierarchy (age, education, formal rank and experience) were markedly inconsistent. Moreover, generational differentiations between contiguous seniority cohorts—which are revealed in this

study—were closely enmeshed with cleavages of an ethnic nature. Worthy of special mention in this respect was the disproportionately large representation of two ethnic/regional groupings in the first generation of officers. The demonstratively Ewe character of the 1966 conspiracy, and the prominence of Ewes (and to a lesser extent Gas) in the ranking army and police commands in the aftermath of the coup, were the most important subsequent manifestations of this fact.

One overall effect of the uneven rates of promotion and the compression of age/rank differences was to make it extremely difficult for an officer to gauge, with at least some element of certitude, his job prospects and overall career development. No advance warnings were sounded when the entire officer corps was Africanised in 1961; yet it meant that those individuals who had been commissioned in the early 1950s, and prematurely raised to battalion and brigade commander status in 1959–1960, were promptly promoted again in September 1961. These and subsequent changes made it virtually impossible for the lieutenant-colonels of February 1966 (or for that matter those subordinate to them) to have developed realistic notions or a sense of perspective about their occupational roles. One product was a developing mood of hostility and relative deprivation from clusters of officers whose advancement had not been exceptional (except in a negative sense) or from those whose elevation through the hierarchy had been less spectacular than the cliques or individuals with whom comparisons were made. Unwarranted promotions—as measured in strictly military terms—stimulated aspirations that were incapable of fulfilment, hence rendering the officer corps all the more prone to fierce in-fighting over available senior appointments.

Africanisation, therefore, had a double set of consequences. It led, in the first place, to the functional reorganisation of Ghana's security services involving an alternative mechanism of political control than that first imported from Europe. This strategy was rightly construed by the regular army as a threat to its corporate autonomy and very existence, thereby explaining, in large measure, the coup which resulted and the high proportion of middle-ranking officers involved.

Localisation was responsible, secondly, for major convulsions in the army's internal structure. These included distorted bunching of age groups, narrow and overlapping skill margins between the ranks, exceptionally high rates of promotional and horizontal mobility and significant deficiencies in expertise and experience at every level of the organisation. When an authority vacuum was created by the expulsion of expatriates in 1961, all of these upheavals conspired against the institutionalisation of an integrated command system. These developments had wider political repercussions, since a lack of coherence within the military itself lessens constraints upon armed adventurism in the political sphere.

In bringing this book to a close, it is important to again stress the mutual interaction of the underlying forces and events that shaped civil-military relations under Nkrumah. It seems clear that this relationship,

never a static one but rather one of continuous evolution, was moulded by the interpenetration of organisational variables with the prevailing sociopolitical order. The point here is that the military establishment was neither insulated nor immune from its societal habitat. Actually, in two fundamental ways, the opposite was true.

In the first place, communalistic identities and competition on the national scale mirrored sentiments and rivalries of a similar nature within the armed forces. The saliency of this struggle for influence and position was endowed with extra significance, and was intensified, by the highly uneven career advancement of different primordial groupings at various levels in the army.

It has also been stressed that, despite all exterior appearances and exhortations to the contrary, the African army officers in the period under review were not governed, primarily, by an historical tradition or ethos that produced the army inherited in 1957. Rather, their actions conformed to traditions and mores prevailing in their own society. In particular, this study has stressed the soldiers' susceptibility to, and participation in, a culture which emphasises the primacy of politics as a major means of attaining, protecting and advancing individual, family and corporate material advantages and prestige. The activities of the Council during its first fourteen months in office serve to illustrate this point in unambiguous terms.

The evidence presented in the preceding pages suggests that the genesis of civil-military relations during the years 1957-1967, which were themselves conditioned by British military policies traceable to colonial times, can only be fully understood in relation to the army's integration in a polity that manifested a significant degree of ethnic/regional heterogeneity and an absorbing fascination with the acquisition of economic wealth and the search for high social status. It is against this concoction of societal scission and intra-military structural fission that the historical and analytical materials presented here should be appraised.

Notes

1. O. Grunsky, "The Effects of Succession: A Comparative Study of Military and Business Organization," in M. Janowitz (ed.), *The New Military: Changing Patterns of Organization* (New York: Russell Sage, 1964), pp.83-111.

2. In the resultant juxtaposition, Ocran took over from Bruce and Commodore P.F. Quaye became the navy chief. Brigadier Amenu was posted to command the First Brigade with Brigadier Kattah replacing him as Second Brigade CO at Kumasi.

3. For details, see S.J. Baynham, "Civilian Rule and the Coup d'Etat: The Case of Busia's Ghana," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* 123, 3 (September 1978), pp.27-33, and "Soldier and State in Ghana," *Armed Forces and Society* 5, 1 (Fall 1978), pp.155-168.

Postscript

The NLC coalition ruled Ghana for three and a half years, during which period the ethnic profile of both the Council and the senior military command changed, in favour of Akans and to the detriment of Ewes. Ethnic conflict and the acquisition of an unaccustomed political role undermined the junta's authority, hastening the process of recivilianisation.¹ On 1 May 1969, the NLC's ban on political parties was lifted. Four months later, on 29 August, five parties contested the election which was won overwhelmingly (105 of 140 seats) by Dr Kofi Busia's Progress Party.²

However, the transition from military to civilian rule failed to stem the rising tide of ethnic antagonism within the armed forces—especially in view of Busia's deliberate replacement of Ewe officers by Akans in the crucial command posts. Soon after the government introduced a stringent package of austerity measures, the army reintervened, this time on 13 January 1972 under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel I.K. Acheampong. Personal career considerations, meshed with corporate military grievances, were the essential ingredients behind the second coup.³

For the next seven years, Ghana was administered by the National Redemption Council, later (in October 1975) restyled the Supreme Military Council in order to restore the military hierarchy that had been subjected to severe disruption by the 1972 action. Acheampong subsequently attempted to perpetuate military, and his own, rule through the medium of Union government (Unigov), a vague scheme of limited disengagement in which both military and civilian bodies would be represented in a no-party corporate polity. Against a background of widespread public dissent, mounting mismanagement of the economy and conspicuous corruption, Acheampong was ousted in a palace coup (5 July 1978) and replaced by his deputy, Lieutenant-General F.W.K. Akuffo, as head of a reconstituted SMC II: the first of three governmental changes in fourteen months.⁴

Akuffo's putsch was intended to restore the military's soiled reputation, but his failure to act decisively in his promised purge on corruption led to a further coup within a coup on 4 June 1979. This time the mutiny came from junior officers and NCOs when Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings emerged as the charismatic leader of an Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. The revolt presaged a cleansing of the Augean stables, beginning with a bloody "house-cleaning" of the now deeply divided military itself. Eight high-ranking officers, including three former heads of state (Afrifa, Acheampong and Akuffo), were found guilty of corruption and then executed;

many others were sentenced to long terms of hard labour after summary trials.⁵

After less than four months in office—during which time elections went ahead as scheduled—the AFRC surrendered office to the civilian government of Dr Hilla Limann. His People's National Party (PNP) won seventy-one of the 140 parliamentary seats.⁶ But unable to reverse the country's economic decline—and confronted by the intractable task of uniting and subordinating an uncertain and temperamental military establishment whose *esprit de corps* had been shattered by repeated challenges to both civilian rule and to its own corporate integrity⁷—the Third Republic crashed to its end. For on New Year's Eve 1981, Rawlings was reinstated by his cohorts as head of state and chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), an administration that has, to date, survived half a dozen major counter-coup attempts in as many years.⁸

Notes

1. For an analysis of these processes and events, see R. Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case," *World Politics* 23, 3 (April 1971), pp.399–430; R. Pinkney, *Ghana Under Military Rule 1966–1969* (London: Methuen, 1972); E. Hutchful, *Military Rule and the Politics of Demilitarization in Ghana, 1966–69*, Toronto University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1973; E.O. Saffu, *Politics in a Military Regime: The Ghana Case, 1966–69*, Oxford University, D. Phil. dissertation, 1973; R. Dowse, "Military and Police Rule," in D. Austin and R. Luckham (eds.), *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana 1966–1972* (London: Frank Cass, 1975), Chapter 1; and A.K. Ocran, *Politics of the Sword* (London: Rex Collings, 1977).

2. The 1969 elections are subjected to detailed scrutiny in Y. Twumasi, "The 1969 Election," in Austin and Luckham, *ibid.*, Chapter 6; and E. Card and B. Calloway, "Ghanaian Politics: The Elections and After," *Africa Report* 15, 3 (March 1970), pp.10–15.

3. The fluctuating fortunes of the Progress administration, and civil-military relations in the period, are examined in V.P. Bennett, "The 'Non-Politicians' Take Over," *Africa Report* 17, 2 (February 1972), pp.19–22; D. Goldsworthy, "Ghana's Second Republic: A Post-Mortem," *African Affairs* 72, 286 (January 1973), pp.8–25; and S.J. Baynham, "Civil-Military Relations in Ghana's Second Republic," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 4, 1/2 (October 1984/April 1985), pp.71–88.

4. Material on varying aspects of the NRC/SMC era are available in S.J. Baynham, "Soldier and State in Ghana," *Armed Forces and Society* 5, 1 (Fall 1978), especially pp. 162–166; M. Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana, 1972–79* (Accra: Tornado, 1980); and N. Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession, 1969–1982* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), especially Chapters 8 and 9.

5. For details of the Rawlings coup and the AFRC months in office, see E. Hansen and P. Collins, "The Army, the State, and the 'Rawlings Revolution' in Ghana," *African Affairs* 79, 314 (January 1980), pp.3–23; B. Hettne, "Soldiers and Politics: The Case of Ghana," *Journal of Peace Research* 17, 2 (March 1980), especially pp.184–187; J. Pieterse, "Rawlings and the 1979 Revolt in Ghana," *Race and Class* 23, 4 (1982), pp.9–18; B.E. Okeke, *4 June: A Revolution Betrayed* (Enugu: Ikenga Publishers, 1982); Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics*, Chapter 9; and S.J.

Baynham, "Divide et Impera: Civilian Control of the Military in Ghana's Second and Third Republics," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, 4 (December 1985), especially pp.634-635.

6. Details and analysis of the 1979 election may be found in R. Jeffries, "The Ghanaian Elections of 1979," *African Affairs* 79, 316 (July 1980), pp.397-414. For discussion on the transfer of power, see D. Rothchild and E. Gyimah-Boadi, "Ghana's Return to Civilian Rule," *Africa Today* 28, 1 (January 1981), pp.3-16.

7. Baynham, "Divide et Impera," p.636.

8. The fortunes of the Third Republic, and the 1981 coup, are addressed in B. Asante, "The Return of Rawlings," *Africa Now* 10 (February 1982), pp.38-42; M. August, "Coupmaster Rawlings: The Second Coming," *Africa Report* 27, 3 (March/April 1982), pp.59-66; Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics*, Chapter 10; and Baynham, "Divide et Impera," pp.636-642.

PNDC rule, and the numerous plots against the regime, are discussed in D. Harris, "The Recent Political Upheavals in Ghana," *The World Today* 1, 36 (January 1982), pp.225-232; D. Pellow and N. Chazan, *Ghana: Coping with Uncertainty* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986), pp.75-88; and D. Ray, *Ghana: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Pinter, 1986), especially Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

APPENDIX A

PLANNED STRENGTHS OF THE BRITISH JOINT SERVICES TRAINING TEAM, 1962-1965^a

	Officers/Other Ranks						
	April 1962	Average 1962/63	April 1963	Average 1963/64	April 1964	Average 1964/65	April 1965
Royal Navy ^b	18/25	18/22	20/20	24/19	26/18	28/18	26/18
Army ^c	17/35	17/35	17/35	17/35	17/35	17/35	17/35
Royal Air Force ^d	48/98	49/94	50/93	50/86	51/70	51/53	51/20
Administrative	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4

Source: Computed from documents located at the Defence Adviser's Office, British High Commission, Accra.

^a These planned strengths were subsequently subjected to only minor amendments agreed between the British High Commission and the Ghana Ministry of Defence. The figures after 1965 are not available. However, according to officials at the Ghana Ministry of Defence, the decline in the size of the British JSTT became increasingly rapid until 1971, when the Agreement was terminated.

^b Taking the year 1964/65, the RN element was made up of 2 commanders, 6 lt.-commanders, 10 lieutenants, 7 sub-lieutenants, 1 surgeon lieutenant, 14 chief petty officers and 4 petty officers.

^c Made up of 1 brigadier (British JSTT commander), 1 lt.-colonel, 5 majors, 8 captains, 2 lieutenants, 3 WOs I, 30 WOs II/staff sergeants and 2 sergeants.

^d Taking the year 1963/64, the RAF team was composed of 3 wing-commanders, 14 squadron-leaders, 33 flight-lieutenants and 86 WOs and NCOs.

APPENDIX B

PROMOTION DATES AND RATES OF NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL POLICE OFFICERS, 24 FEBRUARY 1966

Name	Enlistment	Promotion dates and, in brackets, number of months served in previous rank ^a								Officer service ^b
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
J.W.K. Harlley	01.05.40	01.11.52 (151)	01.04.53 (5)	01.07.57 (51)	17.11.57 (5)	30.07.59 (20)	01.08.60 (12)	xx	01.01.65 ^c (53)	160
A.K. Deku	07.05.40	04.04.53 (155)	12.02.55 (22)	01.07.57 (29)	01.11.58 (16)	01.09.60 (22)	01.11.61 (14)	01.01.65 ^c (38)		155
B.A. Yakubu	08.02.45	01.11.55 (129)	20.02.58 (28)	01.09.60 (30)	01.11.61 (14)	xx	08.01.64 (26)	01.01.65 ^c (12)		124
J.E.O. Nunoo	01.06.39	13.05.55 (191)	25.10.55 (5)	21.03.58 (29)	22.12.59 (21)	01.03.61 (14)	01.03.64 (36)			129

Sources: Computed from The Ghana Police 1966 (Accra: Ghana Police HQ, 1966); Daily Graphic (February-July 1966 issues); and interviews with serving and retired police officers.

^a A: commission as Inspector; B: Assistant Superintendent; C: Deputy Superintendent; D: Superintendent; E: Chief Superintendent; F: Assistant Commissioner; G: Deputy Commissioner; H: Commissioner.

^b Total commissioned service from rank of Inspector (in months).

^c Although the promotions are officially gazetted on the date shown, these three officers held the acting ranks of Commissioner (in Harlley's case) or Deputy Commissioner (in the case of Deku and Yakubu) immediately following the Kulungugu assassination attempt in January 1964.

xx The rank is effectively by-passed as the seniority date coincides with the next rank up.

APPENDIX C
STRENGTH AND RANK STRUCTURE OF THE GHANA POLICE,
MARCH 1966

Rank	Strength	% of total
Inspector-General ^a	1	under 1
Commissioner	2	under 1
Deputy Commissioner	6	under 1
Assistant Commissioner	17	under 1
Chief Superintendent	21	under 1
Superintendent	33	under 1
Deputy Superintendent	44	under 1
Assistant Superintendent	141	1.04
Cadet Officer, Chief Inspector and Inspector Grade I and II	447	3.30
Regional Sergeant Major ^b	12	under 1
District Sergeant Major ^b	37	under 1
Sergeant	883	6.53
Corporal	1,417	10.48
Constable Class I, II and III	10,462	77.36
Total	13,523	100.00

Source: Computed from The Ghana Police 1966 (Accra: Ghana Police HQ, 1966).

^a Until the coup, the most senior policeman had always been known as the Commissioner of Police. After 24 February, Commissioner of Police Harlley was promoted to the rank of Inspector-General.

^b The 49 Regional and District sergeant-majors are Escort Police.

APPENDIX D

PROMOTION RATES OF MIDDLE-RANKING OFFICERS (MAJORS AND LT.-COLONELS AS AT 23 FEBRUARY 1966), FEBRUARY 1966 - APRIL 1967

Name	Date of birth	Date of commission	Date of promotion to major	Number of months from rank to rank	
				Lt.-Colonel	Colonel
<u>Majors^a</u>					
L.A. Okai	April 1934	Dec. 1955	June 1965	9	-
D.A. Asare	Dec. 1933	Sept. 1957	Aug. 1965	7	-
I.A. Ashitey	March 1929	Feb. 1956	Sept. 1961	54	-
V. Coker-Appiah	Aug. 1933	Aug. 1958	Aug. 1965	6	-
E.N.N. Dedjoe	April 1917	July 1958	Jan. 1965	27	-
J.K.K. Acquah	Jan. 1935	Sept. 1957	Aug. 1965	7	-
J.Y. Assasie	March 1929	March 1959	June 1965	13	-
E.O. Nyante	Feb. 1929	March 1958	Aug. 1965	11	-
C.R.R. Tachie-Menson	Oct. 1928	March 1959	Sept. 1961	61	-
A.B. Asafu-Adjaye	Sept. 1926	June 1955	May 1963	42	-
S.K. Acquah	June 1934	Sept. 1957	Aug. 1965	-	-
S.M. Asante	March 1934	May 1961	Aug. 1965	-	-
M.K. Gbagonah	July 1938	Sept. 1958	Jan. 1965	21	-
W.C.O. Acquaye-Nortey	April 1930	March 1958	Sept. 1961	54	-
H.O. Appiah	July 1925	Jan. 1958	July 1965	9	-
M.O. Koranteng	Dec. 1930	Sept. 1959	Oct. 1964	17	-
F. Hammond	Dec. 1920	Feb. 1959	Feb. 1966	14	-

Lt.-Colonels^a

E.K. Kotoka	Sept. 1926	Nov. 1954	July 1961	2	53*
A.K. Ocran	July 1929	Nov. 1954	Sept. 1961	27	26*
A.K. Kattah	Aug. 1932	Feb. 1956	Sept. 1961	27	27
D.C.K. Amenu	Feb. 1929	Feb. 1956	Sept. 1961	27	27*
C.K. Tevie	June 1928	Aug. 1956	Sept. 1961	27	27
J.T. Addy	Sept. 1926	June 1955	Sept. 1961	27	39
A.A. Crabbe	May 1928	Nov. 1951	Sept. 1961	27	27*
P. Quaye	July 1924	June 1955	Sept. 1961	27	27
P. Laryea	July 1926	June 1955	Sept. 1961	27	27
G.K. Yarboi	Aug. 1926	Nov. 1954	Sept. 1961	27	27
D.K. Addo	March 1932	June 1956	Sept. 1961	27	27
M.B. Sanni-Thomas	Oct. 1927	Nov. 1954	Sept. 1961	27	27
J.P.K. Mensah-					
Brown	June 1927	Aug. 1961	Nov. 1963	2	27
S.A. Lartey	May 1924	Aug. 1953	Sept. 1961	27	30
J.M. Ewa	Sept. 1929	June 1955	Sept. 1961	27	30
J.C. Adjeitey	March 1922	Feb. 1959	Sept. 1961	0	61

Sources: The Army Seniority Roll, July 1967 (Accra: Ministry of Defence, 1967); Ghana Gazette 1957-1962; interviews with Ministry of Defence officials; and the author's special biographical file on the Ghanaian officer corps.

^a Rank held on eve of coup.

* denotes promotion through more than one rank by 16 April 1967.

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Interviews

The following are listed with titles and positions held at the time of interview. Where more than one interview was held, only the year is given.

Military

- Colonel I.K. Acheampong, NRC Chairman and Head of State: 13.4.1974.
Lt.-Colonel W.C.O. Acquaye-Nortey, Regional Commissioner, Upper Region: 18.3.1974.
Lt.-Colonel F.F. Addae, Director of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence: 13.4.1974.
Major-General D.C.K. Addo, Retired Army Officer: 1974.
Colonel S. Addo, CO, Tamale Air Force Base: 16.8.1975.
Major-General N.A. Aferi, Commissioner for Local Government: 1974.
Lt.-Colonel K.B. Agbo, Member, NRC: 4.5.1974.
Lt.-Colonel H.K. Agbozo, Staff Officer, Ministry of Defence: 1975.
Major G.K. Akoetey, Staff Officer, Ministry of Defence: 1974.
Brigadier F.W.K. Akuffo, Commander, Border Guard: 28.2.1974.
Lt.-Colonel I.K. Akuoku, Director of Military Intelligence: 1975.
Major W.C. Amaning, CO, Reconnaissance Regiment: 1974.
Major-General D.C.K. Amenu, Commissioner for Lands and Mineral Resources: 30.4.1974.
Colonel H.O. Appiah, Defence Adviser, Ghana High Commission, Lagos: 6.2.1974.
Colonel J.B.B. Asafu-Adjaye, Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Defence: 14.5.1974.
Major P. Asante, Staff Officer, Air Force HQ: 13.8.1975.
Brigadier D.A. Asare, Retired Army Officer: 22.4.1974.
Lt.-Commander J. Asibey-Bonsu, Director of Technical Division, Navy HQ: 22.8.1975.
Major J.A. Bamfo, Staff Officer, Ministry of Defence: 14.4.1974.
Major S. Bamfo, Supply and Transport Officer, Burma Camp: 14.4.1974.
Lt.-Colonel G.L. Bayorbor, Staff Officer, Ministry of Defence: 1975.
Brigadier C. Beausoleil, Commander, Air Force: 30.7.1975.
Lt.-Colonel C.D. Benni, Retired Army Officer: 1974.
Colonel F.G. Bernasko, Commissioner for Cocoa Affairs: 13.8.1975.
Major S.J. Braimah, Staff College Student, Camberley, England: 22.1.1979.
Lt.-Colonel B. Cardozo, Defence Adviser, British High Commission, Accra: 1974.
Colonel V. Coker-Appiah, Regional Commissioner, Brong-Ahafo: 15.4.1974.
Lt.-Colonel C. Crossland, Defence Adviser, British High Commission, Accra: 1975.
Major E.A. Dadzie, Director of Manpower Planning, Ministry of Defence: 1974.
Major A. De Graft Yeboah, On Secondment, Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation: 1974.
Lt.-Colonel J. Dodds, Defence and Army Attaché, U.S. Embassy, Accra: 25.2.1974.

- Major J.K. Doegbe, Staff Officer, Border Guard HQ: 1974.
 Colonel C.K. Enninful, Military Secretary: 1975.
 Lt.-Colonel J. Enninful, Director of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence: 29.7.1975.
 Colonel J.M. Ewa, Managing Director, Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation: 13.2.1974.
 Major S. Gyabaah, Staff Officer, Air Force HQ: 1975.
 Major E. Hammond, Department of State Protocol: 14.4.1974.
 Lt.-Colonel D.A. Iddisah, Commissioner for Trade and Tourism: 28.1.1974.
 Colonel E.K. Korley, CO, Military Hospital, Accra: 25.3.1974.
 Colonel R.E.A. Kotei, Member, NRC, and Commissioner for Works and Housing: 9.4.1974.
 Brigadier A.K. Kattah, Retired Army Officer: 23.5.1974.
 Colonel L.K. Kwaku, Adjutant General: 5.8.1975.
 Major B.B. Lorwia, Deputy-CO, Records Office, Ministry of Defence: 1975.
 Colonel J.P.K. Mensah-Brown, Chief of Staff, Army: 29.7.1975.
 Major A.N. Nkansah, CO, Air Force Station, Burma Camp: 1974.
 Lt.-Commander J. Nkrumah, Staff Officer, Naval HQ: 6.2.1974.
 Lt.-Colonel P.R. Nyaku, Retired Army Officer: 31.3.1974.
 Colonel E.M. Osei-Owusu, Retired Army Officer: 12.4.1974.
 Major P. Owusu, Supply and Transport Officer, Burma Camp: 27.5.1974.
 Major E.K. Quartey, Acting Personnel Manager, State Housing Corporation: 1974.
 Major I. Rockson, Retired Army Officer: 25.3.1974.
 Colonel E.K. Sam, Director, Operations and Planning, Ministry of Defence: 1975.
 Colonel C.R. Tachie-Menson, Commissioner for Information: 13.4.1974.
 Lt.-Colonel K.A. Takyi, Deputy-Chairman, Cocoa Marketing Board: 8.8.1975.
 Captain E.P. Tamakloe, On Secondment, Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation: 22.2.1974.
 Major A. Tehn-Addy, CO, School of Infantry, MATS, Teshie: 1974.
 Colonel E.A. Yeboah, Retired Army Officer: 1974/1975.

Civilian

- A. Addo, Barrister, Ghana Commercial Bank: 1974.
 A. Akrofi-Darko, Chief Personnel Officer, Ashanti Goldfields Corporation: 1974.
 J.G. Amamoo, Businessman and Ex-Diplomat: 26.4.1974.
 Dr J. Andoh, Anglican Bishop of Accra: 13.8.1975.
 James Appiah, Deputy-Secretary to the NRC: 7.2.1974
 Joe Appiah, Roving Ambassador, NRC: 1974.
 Dr S.K.B. Asante, Solicitor-General: 9.4.1974.
 A. Ashiagbor, Senior Principal Secretary, Ministry of Finance: 1974.
 E. Atta-Mensah, Personnel Officer, Kumasi Brewery: 1974.
 Dr Eric Ayisi, University of Ghana: 1974.
 Frank Beecham, Deputy-Secretary to the NRC: 1974.
 A.D. Besley, General Manager, Kumasi Brewery: 1974.
 David Carter, Third Secretary, British High Commission, Accra: 1974.
 A.E. Chenebuah, Regional Chief Executive, Western Region: 20.3.1974.
 J.H. Cobbina, Inspector-General of Police and Commissioner for Internal Affairs: 1974.
 B. Depaah, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs: 6.5.1974.
 John Dumoga, Editor, Daily Graphic: 1974/1975.

- Moses Eni, Secretary to Lt.-Colonel P.K.D. Habadah, Greater-Accra Regional Commissioner: 1974/1975.
- K. Fynn, Ministry of Information: 1974.
- Richard Horsley, Editor, Daily Graphic: 1974.
- Q.K.K. King-Bruce, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Co-operatives: 6.5.1974.
- J. Kutin-Mensah, Editor, Weekly Spectator: 8.2.1974.
- P. Lekketey, Journalist, Ghana News Agency: 3.5.1974.
- L.D. Luri, Principal Assistant Secretary, Office of the NRC: 1974.
- Dr James Nti, Director, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration: 1974.
- T.G. Nyakabi, Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Co-operatives: 6.5.1974.
- Mrs Nancy Ocran, Businesswoman married to Major-General A.K. Ocran: 22.4.1974.
- G.T. Oddoye, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Local Government: 8.4.1974.
- A.K. Okyere, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Information: 1974.
- Opoku Ware II, Asantehene: 15.3.1974.
- L. Otoo, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources: 30.4.1974.
- Maxwell Owusu, Regional Chief Executive, Ashanti Region: 1974/1975
- Victor Owusu, Businessman and Politician: 4.5.1974.
- J.S. Pobee, University of Ghana: 1974.
- Dr P.K. Sarpong, Catholic Bishop of Kumasi: 1974/1975.
- C.Y. Senoo, Administrative Manager, Kaleawo Enterprises: 1974.
- H. Stanley, British High Commissioner, Accra: 1974.
- W.W. Stallybrass, Former Director of Studies, MATS, Teshie: 31.3.1980.
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THE MILITARY AND POLITICS IN NKRUMAH'S GHANA

Simon Baynham

Since the February 1966 military coup that ousted Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana has had four more successful coups and has experienced less than five years of civilian rule. In order to identify the reasons that first led the military to intervene in politics, Dr. Baynham assesses the impact of British colonial withdrawal and officer indigenization. The study is centered around four questions: What were the key social and institutional characteristics of the original security force that was created in the Gold Coast but modeled on the British Army? Why were the colonial authorities so slow to accept the principle of Africanization of the officer corps? Why did Nkrumah dismiss his European officers when this measure had to be accompanied by the creation of alternative security services, and what were the wider implications of this decision? How were organizational changes in the military related to salient features of the domestic political culture and to the inherited machinery of control? The book is based on documents from the Ministry of Defence and other departments in Ghana and on interviews with 96 Ghanaian and British army officers, civil servants, and politicians.

Simon Baynham is senior lecturer in the Department of Defence and International Affairs at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, England. Among his publications are *Military Power and Politics in Black Africa* (1986) and *Africa since 1945* (1987). He is presently working on *The South Africa Security Establishment and World Special and Elite Military Forces* (both forthcoming).

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